

LONDON THE READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 487.—VOL. XIX.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 31, 1872.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[WHAT WAS HEARD IN THE WOOD.]

ELGIVA; OR, THE GIPSY'S CURSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Snake Link," "Evelyn's Plot," "Sybil's Inheritance," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

He sat him down at a pillar's base,
And passed his hand athwart his face,
Like one in dreamy, musing mood.
Dejected was his attitude;
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fevered, throbbing, and oppressed.

The beautiful gipsy girl slackened her pace when she had fairly gained the interior of the wood and came within sound of voices from the encampment of her tribe—voices soft and rich, such as seemed Nature's gift to the children of her more glowing clime—voices that brought a deeper flush, a brighter glitter to the olive cheeks and jetty, almond-shaped eyes of the youthful prophetess.

Amice paused suddenly to listen as she came within earshot of the speaker, all unconscious of the elegance of her attitude as her graceful head and swanlike throat were bent forward in eager, anxious listening.

At that moment her whole soul was absorbed in jealous anxiety for possession of the secret that might be thus betrayed to her, and her beautiful eyes literally burned as if the scene that met their view was actually scorching to her sight.

A young, bright girl, apparently of not more than seventeen or eighteen summers, though in truth more than either of those magic numbers had rolled over her gay, careless nature, was half crouching on the ground at the foot of a stately elm tree, looking archly up into the face of her companion, a youth of some twenty or more years, and as romantically handsome as any artist's or sculptor's dream of masculine beauty.

Tall, lithe in limb, as his forest life might well ensure, with a frame more matured than twenty-one years might have strengthened in more secluded life,

and with a noble, intellectual expression illumining his well-formed features, Juan De Castro might well chain the eye of one sex and win the heart of the other, save that his obscure origin and roving life prevented such intimate contact with his kind.

"Lena," he was saying, earnestly, as the girl approached, "it is useless to preach to me. I am chafed, fevered with this life. What use was it to give me refined tastes and education, then keep me a wanderer like a mere ignorant vagabond on the earth? I tell you," he continued, vehemently, "that our whole existence is a disgrace, Lena. Are we not banned, despised, hated, without country or nation? And you bid me be happy, submissive—proud, I suppose, of my very shame—happy in my vagrant, brute-like life."

There was a soothing sweetness in the clear, girlish tones which replied to the passionate outburst.

"Dear Juan, surely it is truer wisdom to use all the means of happiness that your talents and your knowledge give you than to fret and chafe against the evils you cannot help. Then there are Amice and I," she went on. "Are we nothing in the scale, Juan? What should we do without you? I should be sadly desolate; and as for Amice—"

She stopped abruptly as if afraid of saying too plainly what was on her lips.

Juan started round with a quick, sharp gaze into his companion's face, and Amice drew back closer within the thicket, while yet her ears were literally strained to catch the next accents of the unconscious pair.

"Well, Lena, what of Amice?" he asked. "She is so different to you, my gentle little confidante. I dare not trust her with my wayward murmurs, and sometimes I fancy she avoids, nay, scorns such folly."

"No, no," eagerly returned the girl, "you do not do her justice, Juan. Amice is so beautiful that, even if my uncle were not chief of our tribe, she must be first with all. Then she is accustomed to such homage that perhaps you do not honour her as you should, and that galls her proud spirit. But I am sure, quite sure, that you are the only one in the

camp whom she even condescends to bestow one thought upon, and she would be miserable if you were to go away, though she might not show it as much as I should, Juan."

The innocent girl bent forward and threw her arms round her companion's neck and kissed him lovingly, as if he had in truth been her plighted lover.

There was a sudden twitching of the lips, a grinding of the teeth, that might have been heard even by the young pair had they not been engrossed in the subject of their anxious talk.

"Beautiful," murmured Juan, as if rather to himself than his companion; "yes, she is grandly beautiful, I confess; but it is not the winning, feminine beauty that chains a man's very soul, Lena. Ah, I never knew till now why it was that Amice did not enthrall my whole heart as she well might when I am at her very mercy."

Lena laughed gaily as she answered, with arch earnestness:

"Is it because you are in love with me, Juan? You must not permit that, you know. It would be like a grand eagle and a foolish little linnet, who would certainly have her feathers all destroyed in the eagle's nest. Please don't be so terribly silly."

Juan shook his head with a momentary glance of admiration at the bright, joyous creature, who was as yet unshadowed by even girlish sorrows.

"I do love you very much, my sweet Lena, and I often wish you were my sister instead of my cousin, that I might have the right to the sympathy and affection you lavish on me. But if I am in love," he continued, thoughtfully, "it is not with my little birdie and her lark-like joyousness, but—"

"But with Amice," put in Lena, clasping her hands with delight. "Oh, I am so glad, Juan. That will please my uncle, and I am sure she cares so much for you, only she is too proud to show it, and every one will be happy, and you won't go away. It is what I have wished so often, and—"

"Hush, Lena, hush," interrupted Juan. "It was not that I meant. It is not Amice. She would never win my heart. No; since I have betrayed myself I must tell you more, or you would run away with

some foolish fancy that might do harm to all. Lena, she whom I love is as high above me as the eagle of whom you spoke but now, and as lovely and sweet as she is nobly born. And I—I am a wandering gipsy, with the habits of the deer in your park, and the shame of the outcast on my brow."

Amice's hands were clenched till the blood oozed from beneath the finger nails. Her eyes flashed lightnings from her hiding-place, that might well have scarified the unconscious object of her passionate rage.

"Juan! Oh, my poor, poor Amice!" burst from Lena, with trembling alarm in her very accents. "Is it that then which makes you so bitter, so discontented? Oh, Juan, forget it and cast it from you. Think of all the joyous freedom of our life, think of my uncle's goodness to you, his pride in you as his successor, and of Amice. Try to be happy, and forget this hopeless fancy."

"It is no fancy, Lena," he returned, fiercely. "It is fixed, earnest truth. I will tell you all, then you shall judge. Do you remember when we were in the forest near Mannheim, where that old professor used to give me lessons because I saved his favourite dog's life, Lena?"

"Yes, and nearly lost your own, dear Juan. Well, go on. What could he have to do with your being in love? I am sure he had no daughter," said the girl, with half-comic impatience.

"No, but one day as I was coming back to our tents, Lena, from his house I heard a cry, such a sad, piteous cry, in a voice that sounded sweet even in its pain," he said, impetuously. "I could not see any one, for the forest ran up the very mountain edge just at that spot; but I went into the thicket and plunged amidst the trees and bushes till I was bleeding and bruised in the struggle to get near the voice, which kept moaning and wailing as I went on. At last, after a desperate struggle, I found the spot whence it came. There I saw a girl, so lovely, so sweet, so patient in her suffering, Lena, that I thought I had never seen such an angel even in a picture before. She was leaning against a tree, holding a small dog in her arms, that she had snatched up in spite of her own wounded, bleeding feet, which made her unable to move another step. Ah, Lena, you would have wept to see the agony she bore so bravely, thinking more of her tiny pet than of herself."

"And you, what did you do, brave Juan?" asked Lena, her bright eyes fixed eagerly on him in the interest of the tale.

"I? Oh, how can you ask, Lena? I had more strength than I could have believed. I lifted her in my arms and carried her like a child till we came to the edge of the forest, then I placed her in a carriage that was waiting with a dolt of a lad at the ponies' heads. She said she could drive home so earnestly that I felt sure she was afraid of her danger being known, and had she bid me jump off the mountain top I would have obeyed her, I do believe."

"Her name? Who was she?" asked Lena, in hopeless despair at the danger thus shadowed forth for her favourite cousin.

"I did not inquire. I was too much engrossed with her to even remember that she had a name, save that of an angel," he replied, impetuously.

"You have remembered it all these years. Let me see, I was only sixteen when you were at Mannheim, and now I am nineteen, Juan. Am I not getting old?" she said, laughing joyously.

"Lena, you cannot comprehend, you in your utter innocence, your happy freedom from such feverish pangs," he returned, quickly. "But when features are branded on the heart, when the voice sounds in the ears whether in sleeping, or waking moments, there is little hope of forgetfulness, little desire for change."

"Did she not speak? Did she not tell you of herself and her life?" asked the girl, simply.

"I could not have pained her by a question. She was too timid, too helpless for a word," he replied, enthusiastically. "Only I observed a coronet on the panel of the pony carriage, and I saw that one of her rings was of priceless diamonds. But it was not that. There was that in her every look and gesture that spoke of gentle blood."

"What was she like?" asked Lena, with a deep sigh.

"Like a dazzling daughter of the South, with her jetty eyes, her rich skin and hair, her coral lips and white teeth," he returned. "But her mien was of a high-born, long-descended child of rank, Lena. I would stake my life on her gentle birth."

Lena was silent for a brief moment, then she spoke with an unwonted gravity in her young face and clear voice:

"Juan, I am no believer in the prophetic gifts of our race, and, as you and I too well know, they are often used but as a means of extorting money, and tricking the unwary and foolish, still there is sufficient instinct in my blood to bid me warn you of the danger of this mad folly. I can see only danger and destruction, bloodshed and broken hearts in store for you and others should you persist in this moon-

struck madness. Juan, for Heaven's sake, for yourself, for Amice, for me if you will, crush this rebellious folly and return to your kindred and your duty."

It was strange to see the earnest thoughtfulness in that bright face, strange to meet reproof and warning from those yielding, girlish lips, or to see the very shadow of anxious omen overshadowing the sunny carelessness of so joyous a nature.

Even Amice in her concealment felt the boiling rage within her hushed into a chill stillness as she heard the weird words and discerned the unwonted dignity of her cousin's manner. She waited anxiously for the reply ere she stole from her hiding-place.

"Lena, my cousin, it is useless. Let what may come I cannot change. Better death than dishonour, madness than misery."

Amice's lips closed from their eager listening to a firm, determined rigidity, that would have been fearful in one less young and beautiful, and as she glided noiselessly away she whispered:

"Yes, yes, so it shall be. Death, madness, with revenge, or else happiness and love. Yes, yes, time shall show whether the daughter of the poor or the peasant shall win the day."

CHAPTER IV.

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt ealled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled,
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer.

"Oh, my lady, I am so glad you have returned; the count has been asking for you over and over again," exclaimed Gretchen, the young lady Elviga's German maid, as the heiress entered her luxurious dressing-room at the castle.

"Indeed! what is the matter, Greta?" asked the girl, in a kind of languid surprise, totally unlike the usual animation of her manners. "Is my father ill?"

"Oh, no, my lady. Thank Heaven the count is as strong and well as any gentleman of his years can be," responded the maiden. "But visitors have arrived while you were away, and my lord wishes you to receive them; I suppose. Indeed, he gave orders that when you arrived, whatever might be the time, I was to request you to go to his apartments before you dressed for dinner, my lady."

Elviga gave a little peevish elevation of her eyebrows as she glanced at the timepiece on the mantel.

"My toilet will be a hasty one if I lose another moment," she said, laughingly; "but of course I must obey the count's will. You must have all ready when I return, Gretchen, and we shall soon accomplish the important matter."

"What will your ladyship wear?" asked Gretchen, anxiously. "The white lace with the cameo ornaments is a very becoming dress. Will you like that laid out, my lady?"

"It is not of the slightest consequence; do as you like," hastily responded the girl. And, springing from the room with the light, bounding step of a fawn, she hurried along the principal corridor till she reached the other wing where her father's apartments were situated.

She opened the door of the ante-chamber to the private library, where the count usually sat, and as her father's voice met her ear she did not even pause to consider who might be his companion; but without a moment's heralding of her approach stood within the apartment.

The next instant she stood, half doubting whether to advance into the room.

Count Arnheim was there, sitting in his usual large reading-chair; but near him, on the soft Axminster rug, and leaning on the massive mantel-piece for support, was a stranger, from whom she instinctively recoiled, though there was certainly nothing in his appearance to create such repugnance.

Fair, and somewhat massive in features and form, though with undoubted marks of aristocratic breeding in his most careless gesture, the new comer had yet a sardonic expression about his mouth and a keenness in his light gray eyes that seemed to speak at once distrust and penetration to those who came within its range.

And, spite of his graceful and deferential bow to Elviga, she felt that she was in the presence of one who was neither to be defied nor deceived with impunity.

"You are late, Elviga. Where have you been so long detained?" asked the stately father, as she stood half shyly, half proudly meeting the expected rebuke.

"Simply a longer ride than usual, papa mine," she replied. "I had no idea that there were to be any bounds except the dinner-time for my return. I am very sorry you required me in my absence."

"Nay, there should certainly be no restraints imposed upon so fair a queen," interposed the stranger. "Count, the sturmiest could only bow before so attractive a yoke."

"Pardon me, but Elviga is but princess royal, not queen, in my castle, prince," said the count, relaxing however from his sternness of expression as he marked the stranger's unfeigned admiration of his child. "However," he added, "we will not waste time by any farther parley. Elviga, you will endeavour to make the castle as agreeable as is in your power to my valued friend, Prince Charles, of Metz. Prince, I need scarcely present you to this truant daughter of mine as Lady Elviga of Arnheim and Chetwode."

"Scarcely indeed, count. Though the portraits I have seen scarcely do her justice," was the reply. "I yet believe I should have recognized your daughter from the resemblance even to their imperfect sketches."

The compliment was evidently no mere flattery. There was an eager, keen glance in that cold eye that spoke its sincerity.

And no wonder when Elviga of Arnheim was the object of scrutiny.

Dishevelled as was her wealth of raven black hair, and flushed the olive cheeks, she had never looked more lovely than as she stood there with her proud bearing and graceful figure displayed in all their perfection by her riding costume—a very combination of bewitching carelessness and high-born pride.

Prince Charles read at a glance the feelings he inspired in the fair girl, and by a somewhat perverse consequence he became equally determined to master the proud, high spirit of the fair heiress of Arnheim and many a broad English ear besides.

"Have you any farther commands for me, papa?" said the girl, with only a careless acknowledgment of the prince's deferential bow. "I fear I have barely time to prepare for dinner without keeping you waiting."

"It matters not a little delay in trifling consequence," returned the count, blandly. "The prince has scarcely been shown to his apartments yet, and I have ordered a postponement of half an hour before dinner is served. That will enable you to make a fitting toilet for the occasion."

Elviga guessed tolerably well her father's meaning, and with equal promptitude resolved to take her own way in the feminine province of choice of attire.

So with a lowly reverence to the count, that was a prince intentional contrast to her slight, haughty bow to Prince Charles, she hastily quitted the apartment.

The gentlemen exchanged looks as she closed the door behind her.

"Well, count, what is to be argued from this commencement?" asked the prince, calmly.

"Simply the usual forwardness of a petted child, my dear prince," was the reply. "Surely you do not expect my heiress to throw herself at you like a poor cost-nothing?"

"Do not disturb yourself, count," returned Prince Charles, coolly. "I have not the slightest doubt of the ultimate success of our little arrangements. Indeed I, for one, seldom fail when my purpose is fixed, and you may perhaps find it your true interest to remember this."

"I do not comprehend you, prince," stammered the count. "What can I do save enforce your claims? Elviga is too perfectly well born and well brought up to resist, after the first maiden shyness is over."

"Ah! Is that the case? Is it indeed only shyness?" asked the prince. "Lady Elviga scarcely appeared to be afflicted with that malady to my poor judgment. But so much the better. It should by no means befit the chosen bride of the head of the house of Metz to be a foolish school girl full of childish tremors. I rather prefer having a June to a Hebe for my bride. Still we must understand one another, count. Whatever be the result, I stipulate for my entire freedom to take my own course in winning my bride and your support to whatever I may think fit to say or do."

Count Arnheim moved uneasily in his chair. "Pardon me, prince; I cannot so completely yield up my own natural authority over my child. Surely the word of a man of honour should be sufficient when I promise you every assistance and encouragement in your suit. More than that it would be degradation for you to demand and me to concede."

"Is there no deeper degradation than that, Count of Arnheim?" asked the guest, calmly. "Your house may be a proud one, I grant, but even the poorest is amenable to stain and reproach. It would be a pity that such a slight should fall on so fair a flower as your lovely child."

The words were quietly spoken, but their effect on the nobleman was rather that of a thunder-clap than the careless suggestions of a casualist and eager suitor.

"I—I really cannot comprehend such singular language, prince. It is scarcely the way to gain a high-born maiden to cast idle aspersions on her race and name."

"Nor do I commit such folly, count," answered the prince, calmly. "But you can scarcely deny that

there have been such remarkable proceedings in your family of late years that may lawfully become a subject of comment. The heir of the race disappeared as a mere child, the mother died, it is presumed, of grief. Then, after a fruitless search, pursued even into foreign lands, the late count, your cousin, quietly vanished from the scene, and you conveniently assumed his place, the guest went on, in a calm tone. "Now it is very possible—nay, knowing what I do of the Zingari in foreign lands—I may even say that it is in a measure probable that such a deed might have been designedly committed, provided—I say provided—that there was some motive whether of vengeance or gain for the crime."

The count started to his feet and his eyes literally glared on the speaker.

"Prigge, this is presuming too far. Even my regard for you, my patience, my forbearance will not stoop to endure such imputations."

"My dear count, I make no imputations," returned the prince. "I am perfectly willing to believe that the unfortunate nobleman, your cousin, fell a victim to most causeless and capricious animosity on the part of my excellent friends of the Bohemian tribe. Nay, more. There can be no reasonable doubt in any candid mind that the remains of the count rest in peace beneath the family vault in Marheim Cathedral. May they remain there so long as may be either convenient or honourable to you, worthy count."

"A somewhat bad jest, prince," returned the count, "and savours rather of your country's doctrines than ours. But if you please we will leave the discussion and adjourn to our dressing-rooms. It would be a bad commencement of your courtship to show disrespect to the young Lady of Arnheim."

And with a forced laugh the nobleman led the way from the room and committed his guest to the custody of the groom of the chambers.

But no sooner had he gained his apartment than he gave way to a very different mood.

"Can it be that he knows—that he suspects?" he muttered. "But no, no. The secret is safe beneath the waters of oblivion. Even I cease to realize it at times, till forced on me by some frightful pang shooting through my very vitals. And he is so young, so utterly unconnected with the whole events; it was but a wild hint, a purposeless coincidence. I am an idiot to torment myself by such absurd fancies."

Count Arnheim rang the bell as he shook off these oppressive nightmare thoughts, and proceeded to despatch rapidly the necessary business of the toilet.

The dinner had come to a close—at least so far as the young Lady Elgiva was concerned. The cumbersome tyranny of the English custom chained the count and his guest to the dining-room long after its presiding goddess had vanished from the scene. And the youthful hostess impatiently deserted the more conventional and stately apartments, and sprang up a side staircase to a turret that had been devoted to the nurseries and schoolrooms of the youthful scions of the Chetwodes from time immemorial.

Elgiva stopped at a door on the first landing-place of the spiral staircase, and after a slight tap turned the lock and entered.

It was a spacious and comfortably furnished room, tenanted only by one person at the moment of her visit, a middle-aged woman, with finely cut features, and hair unaged by one thread of frosty silver in its sable hue.

She was dressed in black, with but the entwining of a scarlet cashmere scarf twisted across her shoulders in a picturesque and becoming grace that imparted a singular air of distinction to her simple garb. And indeed, either from her dark brunette complexion, her glossy satin hair, or her foreign air and mien, there was a peculiarity about the woman's whole appearance that certainly could not be confounded with the usual run of persons in the rank she evidently occupied in the count's household.

She rose respectfully at the girl's entrance, but it seemed only as a passing tribute of respect, for she quickly resumed her seat and the rich embroidery on which she was engaged, while the young lady threw herself with a weary sigh on the pile of cushions that lay on the floor by the woman's chair.

"What ails my young lady?" asked the woman, still pursuing her tasteful employment, though her eyes were fixed curiously on the beautiful girl at her feet.

"Oh, Marian, I am weary, perplexed, terrified," exclaimed Elgiva, bitterly. "And you go on so peacefully with that everlasting embroidery as if there was no other interest in the world. I wish I could change with you sometimes."

Marian gave a low, incredulous laugh.

"Ah, it is like the young to chafe under their fancied trials while their elders bear their real burden calmly and patiently. You little knew what you wish or say when you talk thus. But what is this sudden access of discontent, fair Elgiva? What has alarmed you in your own ancestral domains?"

"Oh, I sorely know. Vague hints and fancies

that are far worse than tangible evils," replied the girl. "Marian, how many years did you know my mother before I was born?"

"Not one. It was through your father's family that I became your mother's attendant, my lady," was the reply. "Lady Constance, your relative's wife, was my first lady after I left my own people."

"Then you knew my unlucky little cousin? you remember his being stolen?" hastily exclaimed Elgiva.

"I remember his being lost," replied Marian, with calm emphasis. "But what brings that long-forgotten subject to your mind, Lady Elgiva? It is one that is neither pleasing nor useful to name—especially now."

"Why now, Marian?" asked the girl, sharply. "What difference can there be in the renewal of that miserable memory at this especial time any more than at any other?"

"Because it is now that your heiress-ship is beginning to have its value," returned Marian. "It would be a pity to cloud your fair prospects by even a shadow of the past."

"But that is just why I would speak of it—understand it," exclaimed Elgiva. "Do you suppose I would ever consent to bury such an event in oblivion when honour and justice call for its publication? Marian, tell me, did you ever see or hear of this new visitor at the castle, this Prince Charles?"

The woman started and paused for a moment ere she replied, cautiously:

"His family is well known, my lady. Their lands lie near to your father's German estates, but I cannot remember having seen, this especial member of their house. What is he like?"

"Oh, sneering, cold, courteous, hateful," burst the girl, impatiently. "And my father seems to study and like him as I never saw him do before, Marian. I hate and I fear him."

"And all in a brief hour or so," replied the woman, raising her eyebrows. "Well, you may be right so far, Lady Elgiva. I would counsel you not to offend him if such is the case."

"Why?—why? What can he be to me that I should stoop to conceal my feelings?" said the girl, impatiently. "Of course I shall show the courtesy of a hostess, but I will not submit to any insolence from a prince any more than from a peasant!" she added, with a toss of her proud head.

"Child, he is not to be trifled with," said the woman, with a slight shudder. "There are strange legends about his family that men whisper rather than speak—tales of secret power, of unknown agencies, which make their love and their hate equally dangerous. If you are the object of either may Heaven protect you, poor child!" she added, in a low voice.

"Marian, this is nonsense," returned Elgiva, though her blood retreated from the warm cheeks and lips with an uncontrollable chill. "You forget that in England nothing can be done. We only smile at such old wives' tales here."

"Was it an old wives' tale when the heir of Arnheim and Chetwode was stolen, never to return?" asked Marian, earnestly. "Was it an old wives' tale when his father died on his return to his paternal lands ere he reached the end of his journey to their haven of safety? Was it an old wives' tale that the last words spoken by the bereaved mother, whose death was hastened by the fearful shock, were the gasping cry, 'The curse—the curse is working at last? Lady Elgiva, there may be equal folly in disbelief as in too great credulity. I warn you, once and for ever, not to dare your fate!'"

"What would you counsel then, good Marian?" said the girl, in a subdued tone. "Surely the daughter of Arnheim and Chetwode should not be reduced so low as to fear even where no actual danger threatens?"

"Prudence is not fear, my good lady," returned Marian, eagerly; "and where you have might and unscrupulous ambition ranged against you nothing but wariness and skill can avail in such a conflict. Do not let this same prince guess that you dislike, still less that you fear him; and, what is more, keep such feelings from your father's knowledge, as you value your peace and his safety."

Elgiva grasped the woman's brown hands in her own small palms, and fixed her own dark, flashing eyes keenly on the scarcely less brilliant orbs of her companion, as if to read their inmost secrets.

"Marian," she said, "you are concealing something from me; I see it in your look—I hear it in your voice. And it is not the first mysterious warning I have received this day. I must—I will know the truth! Surely you do not fear my courage or my pledged word, if you confide in me what I have surely the best right to know? What is the power of this same prince over me and mine? and how could he be connected with the long past? I, the sole heiress of my race, the nearest relative of the missing Oscar, demand an answer, or total silence instead of these irritating hints and warnings!"

Marian had not blanched beneath the proud look

and impetuous tone of the girl; and, when Elgiva paused she appeared rather to be absorbed in sad and perplexing thought than either daunted or piqued at the imperious haughtiness of the flushed and eager heiress.

"Young lady," she said, at length, "I held you in my arms at your birth. I gave a solemn pledge to your dying mother never to desert you so long as you might need my humble care; and no reproaches from you shall induce me to break my promise, to the dead or abandon you to your fate. But," she went on, in a more subdued tone, "I must be equally true to my oath to one whom I dared not resist; and that oath seals my lips till all is over and the drama finished. Spare me all useless questioning; I neither will nor can say more."

"If I refuse to be guided by you—if I follow the impulses of my own heart and will?" asked the young heiress, on whom a suspicion of her attendant's sanity was rapidly dawning.

"Then you will make my task more difficult—you will increase the risk to yourself and those who love you best, whom you are bound to love," replied the woman, calmly; "but you would not change my purpose."

Elgiva started, in spite of her incredulous doubts. It was almost a repetition of the young gipsy's prediction, though in a different connection and tone that gave it a yet more thrilling significance.

"Well," she exclaimed, lightly, "I am very silly, to ruin my peace by these vague, causeless apprehensions. It will be time enough to consider my conduct when called upon to act. But one thing is certain, Marian. It can never—never be the duty of a high-born maiden to stoop to deception, or bend to the yoke of an insolent stranger, and I would die rather than suffer such degradation."

Marian looked with irrepressible admiration at the proud bearing of the girl.

"You are worthy of your station. Pity if you should be hurled from your pedestal," she said, thoughtfully.

"At least, I would not fall," returned the girl, with a half-proud, half-scornful smile. "I would spring down from the height from my own free will, Marian. No profane hand should ever force me to bend, no prayers, or threats humble me in my own esteem at whatever cost I may preserve my free and independent will."

Elgiva of Arnheim perhaps scarcely weighed the full import and solemnity of her words as she thus spoke.

Yet in after days, when their truth was far more severely tested than she could have dreamed of in her wildest imaginings, she well and bravely kept her pledge.

She endured and she dared both abasement and suffering, with uncomplaining heroism, rather than brook insult or degradation from insolent and unrelenting enemies.

Marian, Oliver was about to reply when a sharp tap at the door startled both from their forgetfulness of the hour.

"Elgiva, are you here? I have been looking everywhere for you," said Mabel Harcourt's girlish voice. "The count and his visitor are in the drawing-room. Do come. I really dare not stay there alone," added the girl as Elgiva opened the door.

"Silly child, as if there could be the slightest danger in my father's presence," said the young countess, perhaps annoyed that her own alarm should be reflected in her friend. "Have they brought up tea, Mabel, that I am in such request?"

"Yes, I think so. Really I did not observe. I was just finishing that delicious 'Paul's Courtship,' and did not even notice Prince Charles's entrance till his cold, hard voice sounded close by me."

"Does Lady Elgiva usually leave her guests in solitary possession of her saloons?" he said, sneeringly; "or is she bent on a moonlight ramble? I fancied I saw her dress through the trees just now."

"I do not know what possessed me, Elgy, but I answered him as angrily as you could have done."

"I believe Elgiva usually follows her own inclinations without giving any account of her actions, prince," I said, spitefully. But before I had well finished I was half frightened by your father's stern reproof. 'Pray, Miss Harcourt, allow your friend to do herself more justice than your words imply, came like a blow on my devoted head. If my daughter is so wanting in duty and courtesy be assured I shall know how to bring her to a sense of her error. May I request you will take the trouble to seek her, or shall I send a servant to announce our presence in her drawing-room?'"

"I ran away as fast as I could, Elgy. Now, pray do not lose a minute, or they will be angry."

The heiress only smiled scornfully as she calmly took her way through the corridor to the grand saloon.

The timid Mabel could scarcely comprehend the magical effect of the haughty bearing of her friend, which she had so uselessly attempted to copy.

"Did you want me, papa?" said the heiress, pass-

ing to the count's side, without even a glance at the expectant guest. "Mabel brought me a most urgent and alarming summons."

"Elgiva, my dear, what is all this foolish talk about these dreadful gipsies having ventured to accost you?" replied her father, evasively. "Miss Harcourt seems to have been quite alarmed. It is your foolish fancy not to have a servant with you that exposes you to such insults."

"What is that you are talking of, count?" interposed Prince Charles, hastily. "I had no idea that you were as subject to gipsy incursions as we are in our mystic land, where we consider them as part of our institutions, a kind of Sybilline oracle to be consulted at pleasure."

"Here they are estimated as vagrants, vagabonds and thieves," returned the count, passionately. "I shall take care to have them expelled from my domains without delay."

"Pardon me, count; I must intercede on this occasion," was the cool rejoinder. "I have a kind of natural affection for these remarkable Bohemians, and I really cannot feel at home in your country without their neighbourhood. I am sure I may count on your indulgence in this matter," he added, carelessly.

Elgiva waited breathlessly for her father's reply. It appeared in her excited imagination as a test of Marian's sobriety and truth.

The answer came at last, hesitating and deprecating.

"I cannot resist your pleading, prince. If you desire it the worthless scamps must go free. But it will bring my severest displeasure if Elgiva permit any more insolent familiarity at their hands."

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

LUMINOUS TUBES.—A recent communication from Paris alluded to the luminous tubes of M. Alvergnat, philosophical instrument maker of Paris. These tubes, under the influence of electricity, owe their luminous properties to the vapours of bromine or of chloride of silicon in a state of tension. It is then an invention distinct from that of Gessler, since the luminous tubes of the latter, whose experiments are of course standard, do not contain the same vapours, and the tension of the gases is different. Thus any attempt to ascribe the invention of M. Alvergnat to M. Gessler cannot be substantiated.

TRANSFERRING PENCIL DRAWINGS ON PAPER TO BOXWOOD FOR ENGRAVING.—The boxwood block must have a uniform white surface, which is got by rubbing over with flake white, wetted with water or saliva and allowed to dry. If the drawing is to be reversed for printing it must be done upon tracing paper. A piece of paper smeared over with black-lead must be placed upon the white surface of the block, then the drawing. Go over the lines with a steel point, and the result is a clear sketch left upon the boxwood. Drawings for wood engravers are generally done upon thin white paper, and it is usual to gum them round the edges while tracing.

BROMIDE OF POTASSIUM IN EPILEPSY.—Dr. Legrand du Saule has published the results of the administration of bromide of potassium in two hundred and seven cases of epilepsy. Headache, gastric disturbance, disturbance of sensation, and other troublesome symptoms have been described as following the use of the remedy; but these he has not found to occur when the drug has been pure. When the quantity taken daily reaches 4 grammes the reflex sensibility of the fauces, epiglottis, and root of the tongue, and the sensibility of the generative organs, are diminished. Aene then also appears, which is not, however, as has been represented, of critical importance. Dr. Legrand du Saule commences with a gramme and a half or two grammes daily, and increases the dose gradually to 6 or 9 grammes a day; in one case, in the course of twenty-six months, the increase was to 14 grammes daily. In men no result may be observed till the daily dose reaches 4 or 5 grammes; in women 3 or 4 grammes daily will sometimes produce distinct effects. Of 207 epileptic patients treated with bromide of potassium, all symptoms of epilepsy ceased in 17, who were under observation during three or four years; 28 remained free from one to two years; in 35 there was marked improvement; in 19 the intervals between the attacks were increased, and these were less severe; in 100 there was no result. Dr. Legrand considers that it is not safe to entirely omit the use of the bromide, even when there has been no epileptic attack for a year. The patients, however, must be watched, for under the prolonged use of the bromide mental disturbance, stupor, confusion of ideas, impotence and aene are apt to set in. The last-named affection has sometimes disappeared under the use of arsenic simultaneously with the bromide of potassium.

THE IGNITING POINT OF EXPLOSIVES.

EXPERIMENTS have been recently made by Messrs. Leygue and Champion to ascertain the temperature

at which certain explosives ignite. They used for this purpose a bar of copper which was heated at one end only. It was provided with small grooves, placed 10 centimetres apart from each other, and provided with metallic alloys of different fusibility, so that the temperature of each part of the bar was easily ascertained. The substance under trial was then strewn upon the bar in small quantities, and the place where it ignited gave the temperature of ignition. Thus it was shown that to explode the different substances the following temperatures were required:

	Deg. Cent.	Deg. Fahr.
Chassepot percussion-cap powder.....	191	374
Fulminate of mercury	200	392
Equal parts of sulphur and chlorate of potassium	200	392
Gun-cotton	220	428
Nitro-glycerine	257	494.4
Chasse powder	288	550.2
Cannon powder	295	562.8
Pirates of mercury, lead, and iron ..	296	564.6
Picrate powder for torpedoes	315	598.8
" " musket	358	676.2
" " cannon	390	715.8

SHOULD I REPINE WHEN TIME FORGIVES?

STILL, dewy green and daisy dressed,
Slopes down the meadow fair and sweet,
The sunshine sleeping on its breast,
The river dreaming at its feet.
There winds the narrow path that links
The boat-house with the farm-house dear,
And yonder in the sunlight winks
The bubbling spring, so bright and clear.

But where is she whose steps with mine
Threaded the meadow long ago;
When love and life, like rosy wine,
Brimmed both our hearts to overflow?
Where the young face, so fair and sweet,
That seemed the soul of breathing
Spring,

The voice that made my pulses beat
Fast as the lark's far-fleeting wing?

Just o'er the bordering poplars rise
The turrets of her palace home;
I gaze with sad but tearless eyes,
Then let them once more idly roam
Along the meadow, taking in
Each land-mark of the old, sweet Past,
Lost in strange dreams, air-drawn and thin,
Of how our different fates were cast.

Mine from the meadow soft hath borne
Me far away, with many a change,
O'er troubled seas and wastes forlorn,
Through defile, dark, and rugged range;
While hers was but a passage fleet
From green repose to wealth and state;
Life's daisies decked her maiden feet,
Life's roses wreath her after fate.

I know not if she happier be,
But trust a cloudless life she lives;
However false she proved to me,
Should I repine when Time forgives?
And I, at least, some peace may gain,
Here o'er the meadow-land to gaze,
And half forget my bosom's pain
In dreaming o'er the olden days.

N. D. U.

SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE SUN.

WHEN we consider the intense heat which has prevailed in Europe during July, and the circumstance that in America also the heat has been excessive, inasmuch that in New York the number of deaths during the week ending July 6 was three times greater than the average, we are naturally led to the conclusion that the sun himself is giving out more heat than usual. Though not endorsing such an opinion, which, indeed, is not warranted by the facts, since terrestrial causes are quite sufficient to explain the recent unusual heats, we cannot refrain from noting, as at least a curious coincidence, that at the very time when the heat has been so great the great central luminary of the solar system has been the scene of a very remarkable disturbance—an event, in fact, altogether unlike any which astronomers have hitherto observed.

Now certain Italian spectroscopists—Respighi, Secchi, Tacchini, and others—have set themselves the task of keeping a continual watch upon the chromosphere. They draw pictures of it, and of the highly coloured prominences which are from time to time upheaved out of, or through, the chromospheric envelope. They note the vapours which are present, as well as what can be learned of the heat at which these vapours exist, their pressure, their rate

of motion, and other like circumstances. It was while engaged in some of the more difficult and delicate of these tasks that Tacchini noticed the strange occurrence now to be described.

"I have observed a phenomenon," he says, "which is altogether new in the whole series of my observations. Since May 6 I had found certain regions in the sun remarkable for the presence of magnesium." Some of these extended half-way round the sun. This state of things continued, the extension of these magnesium regions gradually growing greater, until at length, "on June 18," says Tacchini, "I was able to recognize the presence of magnesium quite round the sun—that is to say, the chromosphere was completely invaded by the vapour of this metal. This ebullition was accompanied by an absence of the coloured prominences, while, on the contrary, the flames of the chromosphere were very marked and brilliant. It seemed to me as though I could see the surface of our great source of light renewing itself." While this was going on Tacchini noticed (as had frequently happened before in his experience) that the bright streaks on the sun which are called *facule* were particularly brilliant close to those parts of the edge of the disc where the flames of the chromosphere were most splendid and characteristic. The granulations also, which the astronomer can recognize all over the sun when a large telescope is employed, were unusually distinct.

Tacchini concludes (and the inference seems just) that there had not been a number of local eruptions of magnesium vapour, but complete expulsions. Only we would venture to substitute for the word "expulsion" the expression "outflow" or "uprising," since it may well be that these vapours rise by a quiet process resembling evaporation, and not by any action so violent that it could properly be regarded as explosive.

In whatever way, however, the glowing vapour of magnesium thus streamed into the envelope of the sun, it would seem that the aspect of our luminary was modified by the process—not indeed in a very striking manner, or our observers in England would have noticed the change, yet appreciably. "More than one person," says Tacchini, "has told me that the light of the sun has not at present its ordinary aspect; and at the Observatory we have judged that we might make the same remark. The change must be attributed to magnesium."

It is impossible to consider attentively the remarkable occurrence recorded by Tacchini without being struck by the evidence which it affords of solar mutability. We know that during thousands of years our sun has poured forth his light and heat upon the worlds which circle around him, and that there has been no marked intermittence of the supply. We hear, indeed, of occasions when the sun has been darkened for a while; and we have abundant reasons for believing that he has at times been so spot-covered that there has been a notable diminution of the supply of light and heat for several days together. Yet we have had no reasons for anticipating that our sun might permanently lose so much of his heat and lustre that the inhabitants of earth would suffer. Tacchini's observation reminds us, however, that processes are at work upon the sun which admit of being checked or increased, interrupted altogether or exaggerated so violently (as it were) that the whole aspect of the sun, his condition as the fire and lamp of the planetary system, may be seriously affected.

If we only remember that our sun is one of the stars, not in any way distinguished, unless perhaps by relative insignificance, from the great bulk of the stars which illuminate our skies at night, or are revealed by the telescope, we shall learn to recognize the possibility that he may undergo marked changes. There are stars which, after shining with apparent steadiness for thousands of years (possibly for millions of years before astronomy was thought of), have become suddenly much reduced in brightness, or after a few flickerings (as it were) have gone out altogether. There are others which have shone with equal steadiness, and have then suddenly blazed out for a while with a lustre exceeding a hundredfold that which they formerly possessed. It would be equally unpleasant for ourselves whether the sun suddenly lost the best part of his light, and presently went out altogether, or whether he suddenly grew fifty-fold brighter and hotter than he now is. Yet in the present position of sidereal astronomy it is quite impossible to assert confidently that one event or the other might not take place at any time.

Fortunately, we may view this matter (just as astronomers have learned to view the prospect of mischievous collisions with comets) as a question of probabilities. Among so many thousands of stars there have been so many sudden outbursts of light and fire, so many sudden defalcations of splendour. Our sun is one of those thousands, and so far as we know, takes his chance with the rest.



[HARDY'S NEW TREASURE.]

MARIGOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"The Image in the Heart," "Sweet Eglantine,"
"The Three Passions," &c., &c."*

CHAPTER XXVI.

I have read in some old, marvellous tale,
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale
Besieged the walls of Prague. Longfellow.

"WHOEVER you are," said Hardy, "and for whatever reason you visit my sad home, speak quickly and leave me alone with my sorrow."

He who appeared to be the leader of the small band closed the door to keep out the beating rain and the driving wind, which were playing great havoc with the trees of the Clifton woods, and replied:

"Are you Peter Hardy?"

"I am that unhappy man," he rejoined.

"You have quite recently lost your wife, I believe; and I am informed that your child is dead or dying," continued the man in the black mask.

"Alas, sir! it is already dead. Heaven has dealt very heavily with me, and I am sorely afflicted. I would not wish my bitterest enemy to suffer one-half of what has fallen to my lot. A few months ago and my darling wife was the light of my heart and of my home. She expired in giving birth to this little innocent, who an hour before was alive, and—"

"You say the child is dead?" interrupted his interrogator. "So much the better. We have laid our plans well and timed our visit exactly."

He approached the cradle and satisfied himself with a searching look that Hardy had not deceived himself.

"Have you seen any one since the child died?" he asked.

"No, sir. The nurse went away early, and was hopeful that it would live. No one but myself and you gentlemen are aware of its death."

"Good!" ejaculated the mask.

"Why do you ask me all these questions?" demanded Hardy, who was in a state of great perplexity.

The mask made him no reply, but turning to his companions spoke to them in a low tone of voice; then raising his tone he said to Hardy:

"Give these men a pickaxe and a spade."

"You will find what you want," answered Hardy, "in the next room which leads to the garden. But what—"

"Silence!" thundered the stranger.

He made another sign, and his companions, revealing the light of two dark lanterns which they carried,

went in search of the implements, which they found without difficulty.

Drawing back the curtain, he looked out of the window and by the feeble and fluctuating light of their lanterns watched the men at work in the storm.

With the utmost rapidity, though not with the dexterity of practised workmen, they dug a hole in the garden, which was about a foot wide by two feet long and three deep. They piled the sodden and dripping earth on each side, and when the work was finished they quitted the enclosure, the lanterns disappeared, and in an instant afterwards the noise of their footsteps on the stone floor of the outhouse announced their return.

Hardy had abandoned himself again to his stupefaction and seemed to have forgotten the presence of the mysterious strangers.

The leader touched him lightly on the shoulder, causing him to spring up with a start.

"Excuse me," he said; "I am not myself at all, sir. Pray leave me alone. If you are travellers, and want shelter from the storm, take it. You are welcome to such poor store as my humble cottage can afford."

Turning again to the cradle, the mask indicated the little corpse with a gesture of his hand, and exclaimed:

"Will you bury your child yourself, or shall one of my companions do it?"

"Bury my child!" repeated Hardy, in surprise not unmingled with horror. "What occasion is there to bury her now? We are some hours from morning, and I wish to watch and weep. I cannot be separated so soon from the poor child."

"In five minutes," replied the unknown, in that tone of decision which seemed part and parcel of his nature, and which there was no resisting, "the body will repose in the grave that we have dug for it. Hasten to wrap it in a sheet or such other coverings as you please, or others will do it for you."

For a moment Hardy hesitated, and one of the men directed himself towards the crib and touched the clothes that covered it.

A heavy groan—a hoarse cry—broke from the miserable father at what he considered a sacrilege and profanity, and, throwing himself against the aggressor, he repulsed him roughly.

Hardy seized the frail body in his arms and held it to his breast with feverish eagerness, and cried:

"Why do you wish to take from me the only pleasure I have left? Let me enjoy the poor privilege of sitting by my child's body until it is time to bury it decently in the country church-yard by the side of its mother."

With a shrug of the shoulders and a look of haughty scorn the mask exclaimed:

"What do I care about your affairs? and what are your feelings to me? You are useful to me, and I shall reward you."

"Once for all tell me what it is you want with me," exclaimed Hardy, "or you will find that a desperate man is not to be despised."

"Your child is dead; I will give you another, the same age, the same sex, and she shall grow up to be the comfort of your age. I can say no more at present except that a good sum of money shall be given if you can keep a secret. But come, time presses. We must finish this business without farther delay," said the stranger, urged into this declaration by the man's resolute demeanour.

Hardy saw in a moment that he was to be involved in some extraordinary intrigue, and he bowed his head to the superior will of the man who commanded him.

Wrapping the dead infant up, he kissed its cold forehead and followed the men with the lanterns to the grave, in which he deposited the body.

In a few minutes only a slight eminence marked the spot where the body was lying.

The storm continued to rage with peculiar fury, the rain fell in torrents, and evidently by the morrow all traces of the interment would be obliterated.

"Now, Mr. Hardy," said the leader, "I am about to do you a service, and you must swear to me that you will never betray us. If you do we shall declare that you murdered your child and buried it in your garden. There is some ground for the accusation you must admit."

"I am still in the dark, sir," answered Hardy. "Let me know what it is I am required to do."

The mask spoke to one of his companions, who instantly left the cottage, returning shortly with an infant, very similar in appearance to the one that had died.

"Behold this child!" said the mask as the sleeping baby was laid in the cradle just vacated by the other.

It was a pretty child, with a sweet countenance. Its hair was fair and its eyes blue. All babies are to some extent alike, but it was indisputable that this one bore a strong resemblance to Peter Hardy.

Whether it had been drugged or not Hardy could not tell. It lay very still, and only by its breathing betrayed that it lived.

Its sole covering was a piece of rude coarse calico and flannel without any mark upon them to at any time help the process of identification.

"This in future will be your child," continued the

unknown. "Seek not to know whose child it is, and even if you should hear of a child being missing from its home you must not supply any information on pain of death."

"Death!" repeated Hardy.
"I have said it, and rest assured that my arm can reach you if you were to fly to the uttermost corner of the earth. Take this bag of gold. It contains a large sum for one in your position. Husband it carefully, it will be a provision for you in the winter of life."

"It will educate the little one," replied Hardy.
"No," cried the mask. "I forbid you to teach it even to read and write. Let her grow up a child of nature—simple, innocent, but ignorant. Do you mark me?"

"I do, sir."
"You have your lesson by heart now. When your friends come to inquire after your infant tell them that it is much better and will live. This baby is yours now and must be yours for ever. Swear to accept the charge?"

"I swear."
"Swear it by the eternal memory of your wife and child?"

Hardy repeated the prescribed oath, and the masked man expressed himself satisfied.

Addressing his companions, he said:

"Is the carriage ready?"

"It is, my lord," replied one of them.

A harsh glance and a contraction of the brow reproved this indiscretion, and bestowing a few more warnings upon Hardy they left the cottage together.

Hardy remained like one in a dream.
His child was dead and yet there was another in its place as lovely and winsome as itself.

He looked at the god and put it away in a drawer.

"They called him 'my lord,'" he exclaimed. "He spoke like a peer, he was every inch a lord!"

At this moment the child woke up and stretched out its hand with a tiny cry.

Hardy gave it a finger to grasp, the little hand closed over it and a smile spread itself over the dimpled face.

"I will never give it up. Never, never," cried Hardy; "I love her already, bless her heart. All the wealth of the Indies shall not buy her from me."

He made up his mind that Heaven had sent him this gift child to comfort him in his misery.

It had been a lucky night after all, and the wounds in his heart began to heal before the simple smile of a little, wee child scarcely three months old.

CHAPTER XXVII.

What beckoning ghost along the moonlight shade,
Invites my steps and points to yonder glade?
"Tis she! But why that bleeding bosom gored?
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?" Pope.

When the morning broke the storm had died away, the heavy, ragged clouds were changed as if by magic into masses of soft celestial blue, the sun shone out warmly and the birds hopped from tree to tree and bough to bough as if singing songs of joy.

It was about eight o'clock when the nurse who had charge of Marigold's child ran quickly upstairs to the room in which her master and mistress slept.

Her face was pale as death, and there was a haggard, anxious, care-worn expression about her face almost amounting to positive terror.

Knocking at the door, she cried:
"Get up, master! get up, miss! Oh, dear me!—what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

Alarmed at the woman's cries, both Captain Anglesey and Marigold rose, and hastily dressing themselves came out on the landing, the captain saying:

"What is the matter, woman? Have I not told you not to alarm your mistress, who is in delicate health?"

"It was my fault, sir. Last night as I went to sleep she was all right, but I sleep heavy if not roused, and when I woke I found her gone. It's my belief something was put in my tea."

"Gone! Who is gone, or what?"

"The child, sir. Oh, ma'am," added the nurse, covering before the terrible expression of Marigold's face, "don't look at me like that, ma'am; I can never abide it."

Marigold hastily ran all over the house and out of the house, but no trace of the child could she see.

There was a strange, weird light in her eyes when she came back and found Captain Anglesey questioning the nurse in the breakfast-room of the cottage.

Springing wildly upon the old woman with the fierceness of a tigress, she seized her by the throat, screaming:

"My child! my child!"

"Oh, sir, take her off, sir! She's throttling me!

She'll be the death of me. I know she will!" exclaimed the nurse, with difficulty.

Captain Anglesey by main force dragged her from her victim, and she fell down upon the floor in strong convulsions, foaming at the mouth.

"Run for a doctor," he exclaimed. "For Heaven's sake, be quick! She may expire in this paroxysm."

The nurse, only too glad to make her escape, did as she was requested, but it was a long time before the doctor came, as there was no medical man within several miles of the wild spot they had selected as their secluded residence.

Meanwhile Marigold exhibited the most alarming symptoms.

It was with the exercise of all his strength that the captain was enabled to hold her. She did not appear to recognize him. She raved, struggled and fought with him as if he were her deadliest enemy on earth. She bit him several times until the blood came, and showed a maniacal force which frightened him greatly.

Fortunately he had some landanum in the house, and during a quiet interval while she lay exhausted upon the floor he poured a quantity down her throat.

In a short time her eyes closed and she slept. He carried her up to bed, and sat by her side, watching for the slightest symptom of a relapse, but none came—the drug had stupified her.

Bitter thoughts crowded into his mind as he sat there on that fair morning looking with pain and anguish into Marigold's pale but ever beautiful face.

That Lord Kimbolton had robbed him of his child he did not doubt for a moment.

It is a sad thing to bear enmity with anyone, for if you can injure your enemy there are weak points in your harness which he can find out and through which he can injure you.

The hidden silent vengeance which Kimbolton had spoken in such decided terms was making itself felt, and sooner than the victim of it had imagined.

At length the doctor drove up and was informed of the cause of the patient's illness.

"We must keep the lady very quiet," he said. "I can detect febrile symptoms. She will be ill for a long time, and her life will be in danger."

"Half my fortune, doctor, shall be yours if you will cure her," replied the captain. "I am richer than you would imagine from my living in so small a cottage."

"I only want my due," replied the physician, "and will do my utmost for your wife. If you doubt my skill and practice call in some man of note from London."

"No, no; I have every confidence in you. Pardon me if I have said anything offensive. I am half distracted."

"Get the child back if you can. Offer rewards. Put the police on the alert," said the doctor. "When the fever is over the sight of the child will do the lady more good than anything else."

"I fear it will be a hopeless task," sighed Captain Anglesey.

"Hopeless!" echoed the doctor, in surprise.

"Yes. You do not know our history."

"I have no wish, my dear sir, to pry into your secrets, but it does seem to me a strange thing that a child can be carried off in this extraordinary way and leave no trace behind."

"It is strange, very strange. But you would moderate your astonishment if you knew all, which perhaps you may some day. Just now I cannot talk, and you must in your good nature excuse me," replied the captain.

"Certainly. Say no more," said the sympathizing doctor.

For weeks Marigold remained in a dangerous state. She was delirious, and in the height of her fever she accused her husband of drowning her child in the sea.

"I saw him," she would say, "I saw him take the poor babe in his arms and cast it into the waves. Yes, Frank. It was you who killed our child!"

The accusation grieved Captain Anglesey very much. He feared that the idea might become fixed in her mind like a monomania, and that he would be unable to eradicate it when she got well again.

The doctor could give him little consolation.

He said he had known many cases where fever brought on by worry and excitement had permanently affected the nervous system and ultimately the brain.

"Great Heaven," exclaimed Anglesey. "It is too horrible to think that my own wife should regard me as the destroyer of our child, whom no one could love more than I did."

"Let us hope for the best," was the doctor's only answer. But he spoke in such a desponding tone that Anglesey became much dispirited, and as the sight of him infuriated his wife he was not allowed to enter her chamber.

Rewards were offered for the recovery of the child, but week after week gilded by and the chance of getting it back seemed hopeless.

Frank Anglesey was positive in his own mind that he owed this cruel blow to the malice of Lord Kimbolton, and he wished that the child had never been born.

In his strong love for Marigold he thought more than once of writing to a club in London to which Kimbolton belonged, and asking him to take pity on Marigold, return her child and save her reason if not her life.

A moment's reflection showed him that this would not be a wise course.

Kimbolton would only gloat over him in brutal triumph. He would be humiliating himself without gaining any compensating advantage.

The time passed on.

Marigold recovered, but her mind was quite gone. She was quiet and harmless, rather idiotic than raving mad, and the doctor held out hopes that her mind might recover its former healthy tone.

"Do you really think so?" exclaimed Captain Anglesey, catching at the vague hope with the eagerness of a drowning man at a straw.

"I do, but—"

"But what, doctor?"

"You must find the child; that is a condition precedent. Find the child, I say, give her the name and her mind may—mark me, I don't say positively it will—but her mind may be as it was formerly."

"Bless you, Heaven bless you for even that scanty assurance," that meagre promise answered Anglesey, grasping his hand with fervour. "Oh, doctor, if you only knew how I love that woman and what she has done and suffered for her sake!"

"You promised to tell me your story some time or other," replied the doctor, with a smile.

"You shall hear it now. But I tell you in strict confidence."

"Of course."

Captain Anglesey sat down beside him and gave him a history of his affection for Marigold and the romantic incidents that had taken place since the first time he saw her.

When he had ended the recital the doctor grasped his hand, and said, sadly:

"Faults on both sides, my dear sir, and the hand of Fate is distinctly visible. May Heaven be merciful to you."

He took his leave, and Marigold began slowly to recover, but her mind was hopelessly gone.

She was quite childish, and would stand for hours by the seaside asking the ever-rolling waves to give her back her child.

Anglesey endeavoured to reconcile her to his presence.

The effort was in vain. She regarded him with a sort of loathing and distrust, and even met him with a request that he would induce the sea to give her back her lost darling.

Sometimes she would start off bareheaded and wander for hours in the woods.

The people round about began to know her, and point her out to one another as a poor, harmless lunatic whose mind had become impaired at the loss of her only child.

All this was unutterably distressing to Captain Anglesey.

The doctor, who was his only acquaintance in the neighbourhood, advised him to place her in an asylum, but this he steadfastly refused to do.

"You do not know how I loved that woman and how I love her still," he said. "I could not bear the thought that she was under restraint amongst strangers. I will care for and watch over her. We will never be separated but by death."

"The sentiment is very sublime, and does more honour to your heart than head," replied the doctor. "Yet she must be a cause of constant wretchedness and trouble to you."

"No matter, it's a sweet sorrow. She shall not go among strangers," answered Captain Anglesey, resolutely.

And this resolve was firmly implanted in his mind. Wrecked and ruined as poor Marigold's mind was, he did not cease to love her. He would not part with her.

He wrote to Mrs. Henderson, asking her to come and stay with them, telling her that Marigold was in a state of mental affliction; but the aunt, who had always been a worldly woman, refused to comply with his request, pleading ill-health and an inability to put up with worries.

"Fickle as her sex usually is," said Captain Anglesey. "I will see if there is more true-hearted friendship in man," and he wrote to Wilfred Marshall, saying that he wanted him.

A telegram came back, informing him that he should arrive by the next train, and Anglesey's face brightened.

The expectation of having near him his old friend

and companion in misfortune induced him to hope that the clever young lawyer might help him in some way.

A cordial greeting took place between them, but Marigold did not recognize him at all. Her mind seemed a blank to the past.

"This is very sad, my dear friend," exclaimed Marshall when he and Anglesey were strolling along the sea-side in the clear, sharp autumn twilight. "I thought your career of happiness was fairly settled, or I would not have quitted your side."

"You could not have averted the catastrophe," replied Anglesey. "I held myself justified in confining Kimbolton, and would have kept him in his rocky prison till the day of his death. It was his escape that let loose the dogs of misery that are hunting me down."

"Have you no hopes of Marigold?"

"None. I have not relied solely upon local doctors; men of repute and wide practice from London and elsewhere have seen her, and they say that her child, if restored, might enable her to recover, though they do not speak positively even on that score."

"How does she treat children when she sees them?" inquired Wilfred.

"She will look at them curiously, then regard them with a sort of apathy, as if the maternal instinct failed to enable her to recognize her own flesh and blood. We have tried the experiment of giving her other people's children, just as one gives a little girl a toy."

"I should say then that there is a gleam or two of sanity left slumbering somewhere."

"Possibly," said Anglesey, "though the spark is so small that if something do not arise to fan it the scintillation will expire of sheer inanition. Heigh ho! I fear I was born under an unlucky star!"

"You have only made the mistake that hundreds of men make, my dear fellow," replied Wilfred, with a laugh.

"What's that?"

"Loving the wrong woman."

"But remember that we were engaged long before she married Lord Kimbolton," said Anglesey, with a shade of displeasure crossed his brow.

"That's all very fine, yet the reasoning is sophistical," answered Wilfred. "If a man makes love to another man's wife he must expect unpleasant consequences. Would you get any sympathy from the world? No. Would anybody take your part? Don't blame your star. Don't fall foul of Dame Fortune because you have made a bad bargain. Scold yourself rather and that unfortunate fancy of yours for the wrong woman, as I had the honour to remark before."

"Don't, for Heaven's sake, go on like that," cried Captain Anglesey. "My nervous system is not in a state to enable me to bear badinage. Advise me seriously as to what ought to be done, or say nothing."

"If you want my advice I will give it you. Place Marigold in the care of some medical gentleman who will make her as happy as can be expected under the circumstances, and go yourself to any country where the services of an active British officer are required. If you remain here you will get rusty and die of melancholy. Your mind requires occupation."

"That is your recommendation," replied the captain, with a faint smile. "I daresay it is sensible and logical—barristers generally speak to the point—but you forget that I still love Marigold. It is a high and priceless privilege to be allowed to guard the poor, weak thing. If I must out as you predict, let it be so. Life has no charms for me now, and I could welcome death as a friend instead of regarding him as an enemy."

"That very observation is a proof of what I say. Your mind is already warped and tainted with a sort of melancholic despair. It lacks the healthy tone which used to distinguish it. But it all comes of what I said; why will men love the wrong woman?"

Frank Anglesey was about to make some reply of anything but a pacific nature when the door of the smoking-room in which they were sitting was pushed gently open and Marigold looked in.

There was a spiritual pallor about her face which did not seem to belong to this world, an unnatural lustre burned in her eyes, the curvature of her lips was suggestive of artificial help, and her long hair flowed in tangled masses over her shoulders, which were but slightly protected by a shawl. Her dress was of white muslin, rather cold for the time of year, as the shortening autumn evenings were growing chilly.

"Darling," exclaimed Frank, springing up, "do you want me?"

"No. You shall not come. I am going into the woods now, and I have come to tell you so that you may not miss me and follow me," she answered.

"It is late; won't you go to-morrow?" asked Frank.

She shook her head sadly.

"I ought to, have gone in the daytime," she continued. "But my poor head was very vacant, and I could not remember anything. It is clear now, and I shall be just as welcome though I am late."

"Welcome where, my dear?"

"I know. I have friends in the woods; they will not take away my child from me as you did. Oh, cruel, cruel Frank! How can I endure to be in the same room with you? But you did love me once, dear, did you not?"

He rushed to her, and, seizing her in his arms, kissed her tenderly.

She pushed him gently away, and disengaged herself, saying:

"Don't be foolish, Frank. It is all over now. We can never be again to one another what we were formerly. My affection died when you took my child away and threw it into the sea from one of the rocks; and do you know, Frank, little Edith talks to me now from under the waves, and, though I cannot see her, I know she is there."

Frank Anglesey dashed away a tear which sprang to his eyes, and Wilfred, who was much affected, used his handkerchief as if he suddenly found the heat oppressive, and rather trying to the eyes especially.

"Let me speak to her," whispered Wilfred; "you say I have a legal mind. Well, she dropped something just now about her friends in the woods not taking her child away as you did. That's a clue."

"Say what you like, though I don't think she will answer you," replied Anglesey.

"Do you remember me, Mrs. Anglesey?" began Wilfred.

"Remember you," she repeated, thoughtfully. "Let me see. I have seen your face before. Yes; you are Wilfred Marshall."

"And I was always your friend. Was I not?"

"No. You helped Frank when he took Edith away."

"Well, well; you must forget that, you know," said Wilfred, cheerfully. "It does not matter so much now, you have found friends in the woods, does it?"

"No," she replied, readily. "I am happier now!"

"Do you like the child they have given you as much as you did Edith?"

She regarded him with a look of distrust. Her face grew dark and angry.

"I shall not answer you!" she exclaimed. "I have no friends in the woods; whoever said so spoke falsely. They have given me no child; and, if they had, I would not let you know, for you would come again in the night and steal it, and then—and then," she added, with a weary sigh, "I should die!"

She turned slowly round, and passed out of the room, leaving the house immediately, and taking the direction of the woods, her hair floating on the breeze, and her steps springy and elastic, as if she were happy at least in the freedom which solitude conferred upon her.

Starting to his feet, Wilfred Marshall exclaimed:

"Let us follow her."

"For what purpose?" asked Anglesey. "She often walks out like this. She goes and comes as she likes."

"Never mind. Get your hat; a stroll will do you good, and blow away the cobwebs which are gathering in your brain. I have an idea, which I will presently explain on the way."

Making no farther resistance, Captain Anglesey put on his hat, and, linking his arm in Marshall's, the two old friends walked towards the woods together, keeping Marigold's fragile and shadowy form well in sight without being seen themselves.

(To be continued.)

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Countess of Strathpey found herself hedged in with difficulties on every hand. The estates of Aukland Oaks and the French chateau were her own, but there was no available money, and it required ready cash in abundance to institute and carry on a lawsuit.

Moreover, when she went to her lawyer, Sir Henry Gallowsay, he, with a great many apologies, and in a very polite manner, declined to take the matter in hand.

He had never lost a case, and he did not care to lose one. Hers was simply hopeless.

The Earl of Strathpey had accepted and acknowledged one child as his own, and there was not the least proof in the world to establish the claims of this other one! Nothing but the fact that he had a similar birth-mark.

A dozen children in the kingdom might have the same thing! He could not make anything of it, and he

was forced to decline either advice or action in regard to it.

The countess went away bitterly disappointed, yet forced to acknowledge the truth of what the lawyer had said. She had no heart to make another effort.

The winter went by slowly and drearily at Aukland Oaks. Dark days and dismal nights they were to poor, heart-broken Judith and her lady. Spring brought them no hope.

The young foliage began to sprout upon the oak boughs, and the Kentish hop-fields to grow green in the genial sunlight, but for these two there came no rift of light, no smallest ray of hope.

Lady Strathpey made no effort to see her children. Her husband's decree should not be disobeyed. Much as she hungered, in her motherly tenderness, for little Pearl, even for poor, sorrow-cheeked Angus, she made no effort to see them; and Lady Neville sent her no tidings in regard to them.

With the opening of the warm weather she and Judith journeyed down to Dover, and across the channel, thence into the green valley of the Tyrol.

The shepherd's cottage was unchanged. The old man and his wife still lived, and little Romulus was growing to be a fine lad, stout and sturdy, and very handsome in his Saxon fairness; and with every year the mark upon his fair, round arm grew deeper and ruddier.

But the old woman had a strange story to tell.

Only a week before, she said, a strange woman had been there, a handsome woman, dark and tall, but with a wicked look in her eyes. She wanted to see the child, and Lady Strathpey had sent her. Little Romulus was called up, and paraded before her, and she stared at him as if he were a ghost, her face growing white and her limbs shaking under her. Then she went away, but the next day she returned, and said the countess wished the boy to be brought to England, and had sent her to pay the old people for their trouble and take him away. But the old people refused to give him up, and held on to him in the face of all this strange dark woman could say and do.

Lady Strathpey grew white with terror as she heard this story, and she drew the child to her bosom with a convulsive clasp.

"My darling, you are all I have," she sobbed, "and they would rob me of you."

"You did not send the strange woman, then, my lady?" questioned the old man.

"Send her? Oh, no, no!" cried the countess. "It is some vile conspiracy, some cruel falsehood, to get him out of the way. But they shall not, they shall not have him! My own boy, my darling, my darling!"

Romulus looked up with wondering eyes, only dimly comprehending the cause of the beautiful lady's tears, and he listened gravely while the countess and the old couple discussed their plans for the future.

Lady Strathpey desired to take the boy to England, and, deeply as it grieved the old folks to give him up, they thought it would be better. He might be stolen from them, and it was true, as his mother said, that his education was being cared for.

Their arrangements were made accordingly, and after a few days' sojourn in the valley the morrow was appointed for their departure.

The afternoon was unspeakably lovely, the characteristic of a May afternoon amid the sunlit, Alpine peaks.

Lady Strathpey took her little boy by the hand, and started out for a walk, leaving Judith to assist the old woman in her evening labours.

She strolled along the edge of the valley, the great mountain peaks towering up above her, little Romulus gathering blossoms and pebbles, and Wolf, the grim sheep-dog, trotting leisurely along behind.

The boy ran on, shouting and laughing and shaking the blonde ringlets over his bright blue eyes; such a handsome, manly little fellow, his mother soliloquized, so like his father, the husband who had wronged and insulted her so cruelly.

The countess watched him, her heart swelling and her eyes overflowing with tears.

Presently they came to a lovely little nook at the very foot of a great cliff, a mossy bed all overgrown with wild blossoms and red berries. Lady Strathpey sat down on an arching rock, while Romulus gathered the berries and blossoms and twined them into a garland for Wolf's neck. The afternoon sunshine streamed around them in rifts of gold, and the murmur of the river and the notes of the ring-dove filled their ears with music.

In a little while a flock of goats came bleating by on their way to the cottage fold. Wolf pricked up his ears and started after them, and little Romulus followed, shouting and laughing at the frolicsome gambols of the kids. Smiling sadly, the countess arose to follow them, when all at once, as if the evening mountain had sent it forth, a black figure arose

before her, a tall, shadowy form, with a wild, unearthly face.

"Countess of Strathspey," it cried, with that same mocking laugh, in that same terrible voice she so well remembered, "have not my words come true? You are robbed of your wealth and titles, scorned by your husband, and derided by the world. My hour has come."

Lady Strathspey reeled back against the rocks half fainting in her terrible fright; but a shrill cry, a child's cry, aroused her. She started forward just in time to see the black-robed figure disappear round the cliff, bearing little Romulus in its arms. The boy was struggling to get free and his cap had fallen off, leaving his fair head bare. The poor mother never forgot that sight.

With one wild shriek of agony she darted after them, but when she turned round the base of the cliff they were nowhere to be seen.

Wolf the sheep-dog, leaving his care of the goats, started off in pursuit, keeping his nose to the ground and baying deeply. But the scent seemed to baffle him.

In the green valley beyond the cliff there was nothing to be seen but the browsing goats and the peaceful May sunshine; and the poor animal, conscious it seemed that his little playmate was gone, ran back to the spot where his cap lay, and, crouching down beside it, howled mournfully.

Lady Strathspey made her way back to the cottage and told her terrible story.

The old man started out and summoned his neighbour to help him. All night long, from the rising to the setting of the stars, they hunted, scouring the Alpine valleys, climbing the bold cliffs, peering into the rocky caverns; but little Romulus could not be found.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Countess of Strathspey was back again at Aukland Oaks with only a little tartan cap and the memory of a manly little face framed in blonde curls. Fate had done its worst. She had lost her last hope, her last interest in life.

A dull, death-like despair chilled her very life-blood, a terrible presentiment of some near evil haunted her continually.

"Judith," she said, "I must see Doctor Renfrew. He is the only friend I have. I would like to see him as soon as possible."

Judith, with swift-falling tears, at the sight of her poor lady's pitiful, white face, telegraphed for the old Scotchman, and he came.

The June foliage was bright and green as he drove under the arches of the noble old oaks, the grand, dim gardens, sweet with the breath of the hyacinth and mignonette and early roses.

The gray-haired footman ushered him in, and Judith conducted him to the little morning-room in which the countess always sat, the room she had loved in the bright days of her happy girlhood.

White and thin as any moonlight spectre, she arose to receive him, yet a lady still, daintily and prettily attired, her wondrous golden hair in perfect order, in spite of all her troubles.

The old man's eyes filled with tears as he took her semi-transparent hand and seated himself beside her.

"My poor child," he faltered, "what can I do for you?"

"Nothing in the way of medicine, doctor," she replied, with a sad smile; "my disease is beyond your skill. I have sent for you as a friend, not as a physician."

"Then, what can I do for you as a friend?" he asked, taking off his glasses and wiping the dimming moisture from his eyes.

She told him the story of the strange and mysterious abduction of the little Tyrol boy.

"Now," she continued, while he listened in grave amazement, "I have sent for you to make a last request."

Doctor Renfrew looked up with sharp, questioning eyes.

"Don't be alarmed, doctor," she said, quietly, answering his thought as if he had spoken it; "I have no thought of becoming a suicide—I am not so lost as that, in spite of all my troubles. But for over a week I have been haunted by a presentiment that something is about to befall me. It may be death, it may be something worse. Heaven only knows!"

Her solemn, thrilling voice and white face chilled the sturdy old Scotchman's blood.

"My child," he said, "your troubles have affected your mind—you are morbid and melancholy; I must give you something."

"Give me what you please, doctor, but first hear me. As sure as we are sitting here together, some evil or trouble is near me! I am not mistaken, I know it! In case of my death, doctor, or in case of

any other calamity, I want to leave everything I possess in your hands—this place, the old chateau, my jewels, all my personal property. Can I do it, think you?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied the doctor. "I suppose you can—at least, whatever belongs to you in your own right."

The countess rang her bell.

"Judith," she said as the girl looked in, "send the carriage for the lawyer, Mr. Botts—I want him at once."

"If I may leave you all that belongs to me," she continued, "I want you, doctor, to hold it for my son; my son," she added, with a strange, inspired light in her eyes, "who will one day be his father's heir, and clear his poor mother's injured name. Hold it, or spend it, just as you think best," she went on, "for I think you will hear of the boy one day. I seem to have a faculty of looking into the future! I think you will hear of him—you will know him by his face, so like his father's, and by the birthmark on his arm. Doctor, tell my boy how his mother loved him, and try to make him what you would make your own son. Will you promise me?"

"Yes, my child, I will," replied the physician, beginning to be convinced that her mind was wandering; but—

"Well, never mind," she continued, "your promise contents me—I leave my boy and his future in your hands; you are my only friend. One thing more and I will cease to trouble you. When I am gone; and it seems a dark place to which I am going," she added, a dreamy, far-away look upon her face, "not death, or the grave, but something indescribably more dreary and dreadful—"

"My poor, dear child," cried Doctor Renfrew, his voice full of pity.

"Nay, doctor," she smiled, "I am not mad, as you think; my brain is as clear as yours. Hear me out. When you see Lord Strathspey tell him that my last message was one of love and forgiveness—tell him I forgive all his injustice, and love him as the father of the son who will one day be his pride and honour. That's all, only to beg your pardon for so much trouble."

The lawyer came, and the necessary writings were drawn up, the last will and testament of the countess, bequeathing all her personal possessions to Doctor Renfrew, in trust for her child. The annuity settled upon her by her husband she had never touched. He had cast her off, and she scorned to live upon his bounty.

Doctor Renfrew took his departure very reluctantly; his own family were ill, or he would have remained a few days, to see, as he expressed it, how the poor child's malady would terminate. He drove off with a sad heart, after having given Judith all necessary charges in regard to her mistress.

Side by side, on the long, old-fashioned portico, the countess and Judith stood, watching him till he disappeared from sight.

"I feel at rest now," the countess remarked, seating herself beneath the sunny woodbine, and making a place for Judith beside her. "Sit down, Judith; I want to talk a little with you."

Judith obeyed, sitting down beside her mistress, and taking her thin little hand in both of hers. She treated her with the tender affection she would have bestowed upon a little child.

"I think we are about to part, Judith," remarked Lady Strathspey, "as I told you yesterday; whether it will be by death or in some other way I cannot determine, but we are on the point of being separated, my true and faithful friend."

"Oh, my dear lady!" cried Judith, bursting into tears, "you are all I have to live for now."

"I know it, my good girl, but other interests will come to you by-and-bye, and I leave my little orphan boy, wherever he is, to your care. You must aid Doctor Renfrew in finding him, and in taking care of him; and try some time and see poor little Pearl! But 'tis needless for me to tell you, I know you will do all you can!"

"Indeed, indeed, my lady, I will," sobbed the faithful girl.

"Nay, my poor Judith," continued the countess, caressing the girl's cheek with her thin little hand, "you must not weep so—we should be brave and strong no matter what takes place, brave and strong, Judith, and by-and-bye there will become brightness for us—all the day will not be dark, the sunset will be cloudless."

Judith, like Doctor Renfrew, believed that the mind of the poor countess was giving way, and that night when they retired to rest she begged permission to sleep on a pallet in her lady's chamber.

The countess smiled sadly at the request. "You think I am losing my mind, Judith," she said, "but you are mistaken, I never was more sane in my life. However, sleep in my room and welcome—I like to have you near me while I may."

And Judith made her a pallet beneath the window where the summer moonlight streamed in, and lay there for hours, listening to the rustle of the oak-boughs without and to the quiet breathing of her lady, never dreaming that it was the last night they would pass together for many a weary year.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE following morning was exceedingly bright and pleasant, and Lady Strathspey concluded to drive to London.

She was desirous of seeing her legal adviser, and assuring herself that nothing remained to be done in regard to her child, and possibly, although she did not confess it even to herself, she cherished a secret hope that somewhere in the busy city on the promenades, or the drives, or in Lady Neville's handsome grounds, she might catch sight of her children.

The poor mother's lonely heart was consumed with a terrible hungering for little Pearl's face.

And in view of the awful presentiment that haunted her, while she would not openly disobey her husband's most cruel command, she indulged the hope that some kind angel might guide the steps of her little ones across her way.

She made an early start in her little pony carriage with Judith for her companion.

The drive was a pleasant one, or would have been to those in a frame of mind to appreciate it; even in the midst of her tribulations the white cheeks of the countess flushed and her sad eyes sparkled beneath the thrilling influences of the glorious morning.

They reached London early and soon got through with their business matters, the countess receiving no encouragement from her lawyer.

She directed the driver, on his return, to go through Grosvenor Square. And her good angel did favour her.

There, in the handsome grounds that fronted Sir Marshall Neville's princely mansion, a group of children were playing, plucking the blossoms and laughing and shouting in the sunshine. One little fairy, with dancing, yellow curls and sea-blue eyes, was chasing a spotted butterfly.

The countess caught at Judith's arm with a suppressed cry.

"There she is!" she whispered, "my darling, my Pearl! I see her for the last, last time. Youder is Angus—poor little Angus! Ah, Heaven! my own children, and I must not speak to them or embrace them! Was ever fate like mine?"

"Shall I stop at any place, my lady?" asked the driver.

"No; drive on."

The inexpressible mournfulness of her still, white face brought the tears to faithful Judith's eyes.

The carriage rolled on, the baronet's handsome mansion was left behind.

Lady Strathspey had bidden farewell to her children.

In the silver dusk they reached Aukland Oaks.

A travelling carriage stood without the gate, and on the long portico sat Sir Marshall Neville and a couple of grave-looking gentlemen.

The baronet arose, and came down to meet the countess.

"You are surprised, no doubt, to see me here, my dear Lady Strathspey," he said as he assisted her up the steps with courteous politeness; "but we heard of your indisposition, and Lady Neville insisted that I should come over and look after you. I have brought a couple of medical gentlemen with me, who will inquire concerning your malady, and no doubt afford you relief."

The countess flashed a sharp glance upon the two medical gentlemen, who arose like a pair of automations.

"What does this sudden interest in my behalf portend, Sir Marshall?" she questioned, turning to the baronet.

"What should it portend, Lady Strathspey? Nothing more than the good will of your friends. Gentlemen, will you proceed?"

The two medical men advanced in obedience to the baronet's nod. One took the wrist of the countess between his thumb and finger, the other touched her forehead, and begged permission to see her tongue.

"No doubt—not the least doubt in the world, Sir Marshall," echoed both, in the same breath; "hot head, fast pulse, every known symptom."

The baronet nodded again, and one of the Æsculapiuses sat down to write a prescription.

The countess broke into a laugh of genuine amusement.

"In the name of all that is ridiculous, gentlemen," she said, looking from one to the other, "what does this farce mean? Sir Marshall Neville, I demand an explanation!"

Sir Marshall's eyes fell beneath her steady gaze, and for an instant he fingered his heavy watch-chain

in nervous irresolution. But the medical man came to his relief with the prescription. The baronet handed it to Lady Strathspey.

"Explanation, my dear Lady Strathspey?" he replied. "Why, we have come to serve you. Lady Neville has sent her own physician to look after your health. Here is his prescription, and I beg that you will—"

The countess cut him short by tearing the slip of paper into pieces and scattering them at her feet.

"I have a physician of my own, as you know," she cried, angrily, "and I look upon this interference on your part, Sir Marshall, as being very uncalled for, to say the least."

Sir Marshall bowed profoundly.

"I am exceedingly sorry, Lady Strathspey," he replied; "and I beg your pardon."

Bowing again, he took his departure.

The medical automatons bowed also, and followed him.

They entered the carriage, and it rolled away.

The countess turned to Judith with a puzzled face.

"What can it mean, Judith?" she said.

"It means no good, my lady—I'm sure of that," responded Judith.

"Well, well," sighed Lady Strathspey, after a moment's reflection, "I can't see what farther injury they can inflict. Let them do their worst. I am very tired," she added; "and this breeze is so refreshing. Would you mind bringing me a glass of wine and a biscuit out here, Judith?"

The girl hastened to obey, and Lady Strathspey descended, and sat down beneath a bower of fragrant eglantine.

The blue June sky hung overhead, with its pale stars, and the silver moonlight fell about her like a mantle.

She sat for hours, lost in a reverie—dreaming of her happy girlhood, when she used to sit in the same bower and build her gilded air-castles. Alas! how they had fallen in utter ruin at her feet!

The great, silver-white moon stood overhead. The countess watched it with solemn eyes.

"Judith," she said as the girl drew near her, "do you know I have a fancy, or a feeling rather, that I shall not see that moon again for a long, long time. Some great darkness overshadows me, yet not the darkness of the grave!"

"My lady, come in; 'tis growing late and the dews are heavy—come in, and try to get some sleep," implored Judith.

But the countess lingered, gazing about her with wistful solemnity, like one bidding a last farewell.

All at once the crunching of wheels on the gravel of the drive startled them.

"Tis Sir Marshall Neville's carriage coming back," cried Judith.

The countess turned and uttered a sharp cry.

The figure of a man stood beside her, and the next instant a heavy hand grasped her arm.

"You must come with me," spake a gruff voice, "by your husband's order."

"By my husband's order?" echoed the affrighted lady.

"Yes. Be quiet, now! We won't harm you."

He caught her up bodily, as if she were a babe, and bore her swiftly toward the waiting carriage.

Judith followed, uttering a piercing cry for help. She caught at the man's arm, but he shook her off, and holding his slender burden fast he sprang into the carriage.

Judith essayed to follow, but an outstretched hand hurried her back, the carriage door was slammed in her face, and the horses trampled on her very garments; and before the gray-haired footman arrived upon the scene the carriage containing the unfortunate countess was fairly out of sight.

Poor Judith did all that woman could do. She roused a groom and started him on horseback in hot pursuit.

As soon as morning dawned she hastened to London and reported the abduction to Lady Strathspey's solicitor, and at the Bow Street headquarters.

She even forced her way into the mansion of Sir Marshall Neville; but all to no purpose.

She could gain no tidings of the countess—she had disappeared as effectually as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up.

Overwhelmed with terror and despair, the faithful girl looked up the manor, and, leaving the old servants in charge, started for the Scottish border, with the hope that Doctor Renfrew might be able to throw some light on the terrible mystery.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DOZEN years have flown since that summer night, when Marguerite, Countess of Strathspey, was whisked out of time and space in the June moonlight at Aukland Oaks; and in all these years no tidings have been heard of her, not the slightest clue to her fate been obtained.

The event, living in the minds of the peasantry, has grown into a kind of superstitious legend! In the hush of twilight, and around their winter firesides, they tell it over and over with bated breath.

They tell of the fair and beautiful countess, the blue-eyed Pearl of Kent, as she was called, who proved faithless to her lord, and met with such dire punishment, spirited away in a phantom carriage, drawn by flying steeds, just as the bells tolled the midnight hour, and never heard from afterward.

Lord Strathspey was at home again, after a prolonged tour in the Orient, the same handsome, haughty earl he was twelve years before. Time had not changed him, and he appeared to have outlived all bygone sorrows. But he had always possessed the virtue of self-repression in an eminent degree; and it was difficult to surmise what might be the state of his hidden heart. At any rate, he appeared to be content, and all reference to the name of his late countess was forbidden.

Colonel Gilbert Vernon, after declining to fight the duel, had sent a concise statement to the earl, in which his wife's innocence was clearly proved, but his lordship threw it by unread. He would hear no proofs, no explanations, but only cling to his own belief.

In regard to her disappearance he manifested no concern or interest whatever.

Lady Neville had made some explanation relative to the matter, which possibly contented him. He made no inquiries, and appeared to feel no anxiety, and if ever he thought of his wife at all it was with a feeling of insane and bitter jealousy.

Meanwhile he began to return to society again, and society received him with open arms. He was looked upon as a single man again, for West End circles, with Lady Neville at their head, believed in the report that his late countess was dead. And it was such a mercy! The poor man was free again!

Whereupon bright eyes began to droop, and maiden cheeks to flush, and young, aspiring hearts to flutter, and manoeuvring dowagers, with marriageable daughters, to put forth all their diplomatic skill, at sight of this grave nobleman!

What if he had a few silver hairs about his temples and crowfeet under his eyes? His income touched a hundred thousand a year, and the great keeping-up upon his shapely hand was set with all earl's court.

At the date upon which our chapter opens the earl was staying at the Neville mansion, in Grosvenor Square. The London season was just beginning, and there was a grand ball in embryo, to be given by the dowager Countess of Mortlake, in honour of the *début* of her god-child, Lady Marguerite Strathspey.

Lady Marguerite had grown up, under Lady Neville's care, a rare and radiant maiden, fulfilling all the promise of her childish beauty—slender and graceful, with a face like a pearl, blue-bright, bewitching eyes, and a crown of golden tresses that fairly dazzled the beholder. Her mother over again! But Lady Pearl had no memories of her mother.

She was her father's idol. If ever man worshipped his child it was this grave, stern nobleman. The bare sight of her brought a tender smile to his moody eyes; the sound of her sweet voice, the caressing touch of her girlish hands, thrilled him into a passion of tenderness. And Pearl was her mother's image! Yet Lord Strathspey would not have confessed, even to his own heart, that he loved his child for her mother's sake.

Lady Pearl was his idol; but, on the other hand, his son Angus—his heir, who was to inherit all his wealth, and bear his time-honoured title—was his thorn in the flesh. The boy was a living disgrace and disappointment to his proud father every hour he lived. All that money and tenderest care and remonstrance could do had been done, but it was like darting straws against the wind. He was deaf to all entreaty, insensible to all kindness; love had no power to move him, parental authority no control over his low and lawless propensities.

He was a handsome youth, growing up strong and broad-chested, with a fierce kind of beauty in his swarthy face; but, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there was not the slightest suggestion of the Strathspey blood that filled his veins.

His love for all that was low and evil, and his mean, grasping avarice, seemed to be inborn traits of his very being; yet never before, through all the long line of haughty earls, had a Strathspey been addicted to vice or the possessor of bad traits of character. But this only son of Lord Angus was a black sheep, and the blackness seemed bred into his very bones. But he bore the Strathspey birth-mark, the scarlet cross upon his right arm, and the earl never doubted that he was his son.

"The poor boy must not be blamed," he said, in the one discussion he had ever had with Lady Neville in regard to his son. "He is not accountable

for his inherited vice. It was from his poor, unfortunate mother he got his strange nature. Marguerite is a Strathspey, but Angus is an Aukland."

The earl believed what he asserted—believed it, and brooded over it in bitterness of soul. But he was never harsh with his son; he treated him with the most indulgent kindness, gratifying his every wish, and striving in every possible way to win him from the bad.

At the time when the grand ball to be given by the Countess of Mortlake was under discussion poor Angus was at his aunt's, labouring under the weight of his last bad act. He had been expelled from Eton. The earl had contrived to get him into the college, despite his stupidity and indolence, and in deference to his father, and to all the clever Strathspey youths who had been there before him, the professors winked at his failings and shortcomings, turned a deaf ear to his vices, and bore with him until patience ceased to be a virtue, and, in justice to the other students, they were forced to expel him in disgrace.

Lord Strathspey was cut to the heart; but his graceless son seemed rather exultant over his escape from such a stupid prison, and proceeded to make himself at home in London, drinking and gambling, and frequenting low haunts of vice, with all the nonchalant assurance of a *blasé* man of five-and-forty.

Whereupon the earl proceeded to obtain for him a commission in the army, hoping that active life and variety of scene might change his brutal habits; but the young gentleman very promptly refused to accept the commission, and proved himself to be his father's son in one respect at least, in the stubborn strength of his own will.

Persuasions did not move him, and threats only served to strengthen his determination.

"It's a deuced sight nicer," as he expressed it, "to lounge about London with plenty of spare change and spare time than to be marched off to India, and set up for a target. No commission in the army for me."

"Then, sir, what will you have?" thundered the earl, exasperated for the first time beyond all endurance, "what do you purpose doing?"

"Nothing," replied Angus, promptly. "I shall live on my income."

"And disgrace your father's name by your ignorance and brutality," cried the mortified earl. "I have borne with your stubborn temper long enough, sir! You won't be educated and you won't be a soldier. We'll see! Now take your choice. Accept this commission, and discharge your duty as a gentleman and a Strathspey, or from this hour I cut off your allowance, and leave you to shift for yourself."

The young man shrugged his shoulders, and half closed his greenish gray eyes in a manner peculiar to himself, and putting out his hand he snatched up the commission from the table where it lay, and dropped it upon the bed of glowing coals that filled the grate.

For a moment the earl was utterly confounded by the audacity of the act, then his hot temper got the better of him.

"You impudent young scoundrel!" he stormed, "I have half a mind to disinherit you!"

"You can't go that far, governor," sneered the youth; "the Strathspey property is entailed, and falls from father to son."

The enraged father caught the young scapegrace by the collar and shook him soundly.

"Now dare to give me another word of your insolence," he thundered, "and I'll wear out my horse-whip over your shoulders! The Strathspey property does fall from father to son; but when a man is cursed with a degraded offspring such as you are there's a provision for cutting off the entail, and leaving the title and estates in decent hands. Young man, mark my word, if you don't mend your ways, and mend them speedily, I'll do it!"

"Will you?" hissed the boy, coming close to his father, his head protruding like that of a serpent about to strike, his greenish eyes blazing, and his whole aspect and attitude one of fiendish rage. "Will you, Earl of Strathspey? Then I'll murder you!"

Lord Strathspey reeled back with a gasping cry, and in his ears, as if some voice had uttered it, rang the old, awful prediction:

"Born to be hung! Man cannot fight with fate!"

(To be continued.)

CONSCIENCE RESTITUTIONS.—The German headquarters at Nancy offer to restitute the following articles, found in October or November, 1870, in an abandoned house of Bougival, five miles west of Paris, viz.: One sugar basin, one cream jug, two forks, six tea-spoons, etc., one piece of brown silk, one lilac silk dress, one fan. The next avis of con-

science restitutions interests "the inhabitants of a certain, situate about a mile and a half from Le Mans, on the right of the highway from Orleans." The articles mentioned are two pair of silver knives and forks, two silver spoons, with crown and crest, two pair of ear-rings, one brooch (gold and coral), one decoration, with the motto *Au mérite*.

LIGHT AND DARK SKINS.—It is alleged that coloured persons are never sunburned because the dark colour of their skins absorbs the heat and conveys it into the system, so that it is converted into sensible heat, producing perspiration. But the white skin does not absorb the heat; the sun's rays therefore rest upon and burn it.

ROBERT RUSHTON'S DESTINY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Unbidden guests

"Are often welcome when they are gone."

Henry VI.

The stranger was placed in rather an awkward predicament by the unwelcome advent of the miser. However, he betrayed neither embarrassment nor alarm. Moving out the candle, he advanced to the table and set it down.

This movement brought him nearer John Nichols, who, with the timidity natural to an old man, anticipated an immediate attack.

"Don't kill me! Spare my life!" he exclaimed, hastily stepping back.

"I see you don't know me, Uncle John!" said the intruder, familiarly.

"Who are you that call me Uncle John?" asked the old man, somewhat reassured.

"Benjamin Haley, your sister's son. Do you know me now?"

"You Ben Haley?" exclaimed the old man, betraying surprise. "Why, you are old enough to be his father."

"Remember, Uncle John, I am eighteen years older than when you saw me last. Time brings changes, you know. When I saw you last you were in the prime of life, now you are a feeble old man."

"Are you really Ben-Haley?" asked the old man, doubtfully.

"To be sure I am. I suppose I look to you more like a bearded savage. Well, I'm not responsible for my looks. Not finding you at home I took the liberty of coming in on the score of relationship."

"What were you doing with that candle?" asked John, suspiciously.

"I went down the cellar with it."

"Down the cellar?" repeated his uncle, with a look of alarm, which did not escape his nephew. "What for?"

"In search of something to eat. All I could find in the cupboard was a dry loaf, which didn't look very appetizing."

"There's nothing down the cellar. Don't go there again," said the old man, still uneasy.

His nephew looked at him shrewdly.

"He, Uncle John, I've guessed your secret very soon," he said to himself. "Some of your money is hidden away in the cellar, I'm thinking."

"Where do you keep your provisions, then?" he said, aloud.

"The loaf is all I have."

"Come, Uncle John, you don't mean it. That's a poor welcome to give a nephew you haven't seen for eighteen years. I'm going to stay to dinner with you, and you must give me something better than that. Haven't you got any meat in the house?"

"No."

Just then Ben Haley, looking from the window, saw some chickens in the yard. His eye lighted up at the discovery.

"Ah, there is a nice fat chicken," he said. "We'll have a chicken dinner. Shall it be roast or boiled?"

"No, no," said the old farmer, hastily. "I can't spare them. They'll bring a good price in the market by and-by."

"Don't help it, Uncle John; charity begins at home. Excuse me a minute, I'll be back directly."

He strode to the door and out into the yard. Then, after a little manoeuvring, he caught a chicken, and, going to the block, seized the axe and soon decapitated it.

"What have you done?" said John, ruefully, for the old man had followed his nephew, and was looking on in a very uncomfortable frame of mind.

"Taken the first step towards a good dinner," said the other, coolly. "I am not sure but we shall want two."

"No, no!" said John, hastily. "I haven't got much appetite."

"Then perhaps we can make one do. I'll just get it ready, and cook it myself. I've knocked about in all sorts of places, and it won't be the first time I've served as a cook. I've travelled a good deal since I saw you last."

"Have you?" said the old man, who however seemed more interested in the untimely death of the pullet than in his nephew's adventures.

"Yes, I've been everywhere. I spent a year in Australia at the gold diggings."

"Did you find any?" asked his uncle, for the first time betraying interest.

"Some, but I didn't bring away any."

Ben Haley meanwhile was rapidly stripping the chicken of its feathers. When he finished he said:

"Now tell me where you keep your vegetables, Uncle John?"

"They're in the corn-barn. You can't get in. It's locked."

"Where's the key?"

"Lost."

"I'll get in, never fear," said the intruder, and he led the way to the corn-barn, his uncle unwillingly following and protesting that it would be quite impossible to enter.

Reaching the building, he stepped back and was about to kick open the door when old John hurriedly interposed, saying:

"No, no! I've found the key."

His nephew took it from his hand, and, unlocking the door, brought out a liberal supply of potatoes.

"We'll have a good dinner after all," he said.

"You don't half know how to live, Uncle John. You need me here. You've got plenty about you, but you don't know how to use it."

The free-and-easy manner in which his nephew conducted himself was peculiarly annoying and exasperating to the old man, but as often as he was impelled to speak the sight of his nephew's resolute face and vigorous frame, which he found it difficult to connect with his recollections of young Ben, terrified him into silence, and he contented himself with following his nephew uneasily with looks of suspicion.

When the dinner was prepared both sat down to partake of it, but Ben quietly, and, as a matter of course, assumed the place of host and carved the fowl. Notwithstanding the shock which his economical notions had received, the farmer ate with appetite the best meal of which he had partaken for a long time. Ben had not vaunted too highly his skill as a cook. Wherever he had acquired it, he evidently understood the preparation of such a dinner as lay before them.

"Now, Uncle John, if we only had a mug of cider to wash down the dinner. Haven't you got some somewhere?"

"Not a drop."

"Don't you think I might find some stored away in the cellar, for instance?" asked Ben, fixing his glance upon his uncle's face.

"No, no; didn't I tell you I hadn't got any?" returned John Nichols, with petulance and alarm.

"I mean to see what else you have in the cellar," said Ben to himself, "before I leave this place. There's a reason for that pale face of yours." But he only said aloud, "Well, if you haven't got any we must do without it. There's a little more of the chicken left. As you don't want it I'll appropriate it. Nothing like clearing up things. Come, this is rather better than dry bread, isn't it?"

"It's very expensive," said the miser, ruefully.

"Well, you can afford it, Uncle John—there's a comfort in that. I suppose you are pretty rich—eh?"

"Rich!" repeated John, in dismay. "What put such a thing into your head?"

"Not your style of living, you may be sure of that."

"I am poor, Benjamin. You mustn't talk otherwise. I live as well as I can afford."

"Then what have you been doing with your savings all these years?"

"My savings?" It has taken all I had to live. There isn't any money to be made by farming. It's hard work and poor pay."

"You used to support your family comfortably when you had one."

"Don't—don't speak of them. I can't bear it," said John, his countenance changing. "When I had them I was happy."

"And now you're not. Well, I don't wonder at it; it must be dismal enough living alone. You need somebody with you. I am your nephew and nearest relation. I feel that it is my duty to stay with you."

The expression of dismay which overspread the old man's face at this declaration was ludicrous.

"You stay with me?" he repeated, in a tone of alarm.

"Yes, for a time, at least. We'll be company for each other, won't we, Uncle John?"

"No, no; there's no room."

"No room?" You don't mean to say that you need the whole house?"

"I mean I cannot afford to have you here. Besides, I am used to being alone—I prefer it."

"That's complimentary at any rate. You prefer to be alone rather than to have me with you?"

"Don't be offended, Benjamin. I've been alone so many years. Besides, you'd feel dull here—you wouldn't like it."

"I'll try it and see. What room are you going to give me?"

"You'd better go away."

"Well, uncle, we'll talk about that to-morrow. You're very considerate in fearing it will be dull for me, but I've roamed about the world so much that I shall be glad of a little dullness. So it's all settled. Now, Uncle John, if you don't object I'll take out my pipe and have a smoke. I always smoke after dinner."

He lit his pipe, and, throwing himself back in a chair, began to puff away leisurely, his uncle surveying him with fear and embarrassment. "Why should his graceless nephew roaster after so many years in the form of this big, broad-shouldered, heavy-bearded stranger, only to annoy him and thrust his unwelcome company upon him?"

The old man looked forward with dismay at the prospect of having his nephew remain with him as a guest. Like all misers he had a distrust of every one, and the present appearance of his nephew only confirmed the impressions he still retained of his earlier bad conduct. "He had all the will to turn him out of his house, but Ben was vastly his superior in size and strength, and he did not dare to attempt it."

"He wants to rob, perhaps to murder me," thought John, surveying his big nephew with a troubled gaze.

His apprehensions were such that he even meditated offering to pay the intruder's board for a week at the tavern if he would leave him in peace by himself. But the reluctance to part with his money finally prevented such a proposal being made.

In the afternoon the old man stayed at home. He did not dare to leave if left Ben should take a fancy to search the house and come upon some of his secret hoards, for people were right in reporting that he hid his money.

At last evening came. "With visible discomposure the old man showed Ben to a room."

"You can sleep there," he said, pointing to a bed in the corner of the room.

"All right, uncle. Good-night!"

"Good-night!" said John Nichols.

He went out and closed the door behind him. He not only closed it but locked it, having secretly hidden the key in his pocket. He chuckled softly to himself as he went downstairs. His nephew was securely disposed of for the night, being fastened in his chamber. But if he expected Ben Haley quietly to submit to this incarceration he was entirely mistaken in that individual. The latter heard the key turn in the lock, and comprehended at once his uncle's stratagem. Instead of being angry he was amused.

"So my simple-minded uncle thinks he has drawn my teeth, does he? I'll just startle him a little."

He began to jump up and down on the chamber floor in his heavy boots, which, as the floor was uncarpeted, made a terrible noise.

The old man in the room below, just congratulating himself on his cunning move, grew pale as he listened. He supposed his nephew to be in a furious passion, and apprehensions of personal violence disturbed him. Still he reflected that his prisoner would be unable to get out, and in the morning he could go for the constable.

But he was interrupted by a different noise. Ben had drawn off his boots, and was flinging them one after the other at the door.

The noise became so intolerable that John was compelled to ascend the stairs, trembling with fear.

"What's the matter?" he inquired at the door, in a quavering voice.

"Open the door," returned Ben.

His uncle reluctantly inserted the key in the lock, and opening it presented a pale, terrified face in the doorway.

His nephew, with his coat stripped off, was sitting on the side of the bed.

"What's the matter?" asked John.

"Nothing, only you locked the door by mistake," said Ben, coolly.

"What made you make such a noise?" demanded John.

"To call you up. There was no bell in the room, so that was the only way I had of doing it. What made you lock me in?"

"I didn't think," stammered the old man.

"Just what I supposed. To guard against your making that mistake again, let me have the key."

"I'd rather keep it, if it's the same to you," said John, in alarm.

"But it isn't the same to me. You see, Uncle John, you are growing old and forgetful, and might lock me in again. That wouldn't be pleasant, you know, especially if the house should catch fire in the night."

"What!" exclaimed John, terror-stricken, half suspecting his nephew contemplated turning incendiary.

"I don't think it will, but it's best to be prepared, so give me the key."

The old man feebly protested, but ended in giving up the key to his nephew.

"There, that's all right. Now I'll turn in. Good-night."

"Good-night," responded John Nichols, and left the chamber, feeling more alarmed than ever.

He was beginning to be more afraid and more distrustful of his nephew than ever. What if the latter should light on some of his various hiding-places for money? Why, in that very chamber he had a hundred pounds in gold hidden behind the plastering. He groaned in spirit as he thought of it, and determined to tell his nephew the next morning that he must find another home, as he couldn't and wouldn't consent to his remaining longer.

But when the morning came he found this task a difficult one to enter upon.

Finally, after breakfast, which consisted of eggs and toast—Ben Haley having ransacked the premises for eggs, which the old man intended for the market—John said:

"Benjamin, you must not be offended, but I have lived alone for years, and I cannot invite you to stay longer."

"Where shall I go, uncle?" demanded Ben, taking out his pipe coolly and lighting it.

"There's a tavern in the village."

"Is there? That won't do me any good."

"You'll be better off there than here. They set a very good table, and—"

"You don't," said Ben, finishing the sentence. "I know that; but then, uncle, I have two reasons for preferring to stay here. The first is that I may enjoy the society of my only living relation; the second is that I haven't money enough to pay my board at the hotel."

He leaned back, and began to puff lazily at his pipe, as if this settled the matter.

"If you have no money why do you come to me?" demanded John, angrily. "Do you expect me to support you?"

"You wouldn't turn out your sister's son, would you, Uncle John?"

"You must earn your own living. I can't support you in idleness."

"You needn't; I'll work for you. Let me see, I'll do the cooking."

"I don't want you here," said the old man, desperately. "Why do you come to disturb me after so many years?"

"I'll go away on one condition," said Ben Haley.

"What's that?"

"Give me, or lend me—I don't care which—a hundred pounds."

"Do you think I am made of money?" asked John, fear and anger struggling for the mastery.

"I think you can spare me a hundred pounds."

"Go away! You are a bad man! You were a wild, bad boy, and you are no better now."

"Now, Uncle John, I think you're rather too hard upon me. Just consider that I am your nephew. What will people say if you turn me out of doors?"

"I don't care what they say. I can't have you here."

"I am sorry I can't oblige you by going, Uncle John, but I've got a headache this morning, and don't feel like stirring. Let me stay with you a day or two, and then I may go."

Vain were all the old man's expostulations. His nephew sat obstinately smoking, and refused to move.

"Come out with me to the barn while I milk," said John, at length, not daring to leave his nephew by himself.

"Thank you, but I'm as well off as I am. I've got a headache, and I'd rather stay here."

Milking could no longer be deferred. But for the stranger's presence it would have been attended to two hours earlier.

Groaning in spirit, and with many forebodings, John went out to the barn, and in due time returned with his foaming pails. There sat his nephew in the old place, apparently not having stirred. Possibly he didn't mean mischief, after all, John reflected.

At any rate, he must leave him, again while he released the cows from their stalls and drove them to pasture. He tried to obtain his nephew's companionship, but in vain.

"I'm not interested in cows, uncle," he said. "I'll be here when you come back."

With a sigh his uncle left the house, only half reassured. That he had reason for his distrust was proved by Ben Haley's movements. He lighted a candle, and going into the cellar, first snoring a pickaxe, struck into the earthen flooring, and began to work energetically.

"I am sure some of the old man's money is here," he said to himself. "I must work fast, or he'll catch me at it."

Half an hour later John Nichols re-entered the house. He looked for his nephew, but his seat was vacant. He thought he heard a dull thud in the cellar beneath. He hurried to the staircase, and tottered down.

Ben had come upon a tin quart measure, partly filled with gold coins, and was in the act of transferring them to his pocket.

With a hoarse cry like that of an animal deprived of its young, his uncle sprang upon him, fastening his claw-like nails in the face of his burly nephew.

The attack was so sudden, and the old man's desperation so reinforced his feeble strength that Ben Haley was thrown forward, and the measure of gold coins fell from his hand.

But he quickly recovered himself.

"Let me alone," he said, sternly, forcibly removing his uncle's hands from his face, but not before the claw-like nails had drawn blood. "Let me alone if you know what is best for yourself."

"You're a thief!" screamed John. "You shall go to jail for this."

"Shall I?" asked Ben, his face darkening, and his tone full of menace. "Who is going to send me there?"

"I am," answered John. "I'll have you arrested."

"Look here, Uncle John," said Ben, confining the old man's arms to his side, "it's time we had a little talk together. You'd better not do as you say."

"You're a thief. The jail is the place for thieves."

"It isn't the place for me, and I'm not going there. Now let us come to an understanding. You are rich and I am poor."

"Rich!" repeated John.

"Yes; at any rate you have got this farm and more money hidden away than you will ever use. I am poor. You can spare me this money here as well as not."

"It is all I have."

"I know better than that. You have plenty more, but I will be satisfied with this. Remember I am your sister's son."

"I don't care if you are," said the old man, doggedly.

"And you owe me some help. You'll never miss it. Now make up your mind to give me this money, and I'll go away and leave you in peace."

"Never!" exclaimed John, struggling hard to free himself.

"You won't?"

His uncle repeated the emphatic refusal.

"Then I shall have to put it out of your power to carry out your threat."

He took his uncle up in his strong arms and moved toward the stairs.

"Are you going to murder me?" asked John, in an agony of fear.

"You will find out what I am going to do," said Ben, grimly.

He carried his uncle upstairs, and, possessing himself of a clothes line which was in one corner of the kitchen, proceeded to tie him hand and foot, despite his feeble opposition.

"There," said he, when his uncle lay before him utterly helpless, "I think that disposes of you for a while. Now for the gold."

Leaving him on the floor, he again descended the cellar stairs, and began to gather up the gold coins, which had been scattered about the floor at the time of John's unexpected attack.

The old man groaned in spirit as he found himself about to be robbed and utterly helpless to resist the outrage. But help was near at hand, though he knew it not. Robert Rushton had thought more than once of his unknown passenger of the day before, and the particular inquiries he made concerning John Nichols and his money. Ben Haley had impressed him far from favourably, and the more he talked to mind his appearance the more he feared that he meditated some dishonest designs upon John. So the next morning, in order to satisfy his mind that all was right, he rowed across to the same place, where he had landed Ben, and, fastening his boat, went up to the farmhouse. He reached it just as Ben, having secured the old man, had gone back into the cellar to gather up the gold.

Robert looked through the window, and to his surprise saw the old farmer lying bound hand and foot. He quickly leaped into the room and untied what was the matter.

"Hush!" said the old man; "he'll hear you."

"Who do you mean?"

"My nephew."

"Where is he?"

"Down the cellar. He's tied me here, and is stealing all my gold."

"What shall I do? Can I help you?"

"Cut the ropes first."

Robert drew a jack-knife from his pocket and did as he was bidden.

"Now," said John, rising with a sigh of relief from his constrained position, "while I bolt the cellar door you go upstairs, and in the closet of the room over this you will find a gun. It is loaded. Bring it down."

Robert hurried upstairs, and quickly returned with the weapon.

"Do you know how to fire a gun?" asked John.

"Yes," said Robert.

"Then keep it; for my nerves are weak, and my hand trembles. If he breaks through the door you must fire."

Ben Haley would have been up before this, but it occurred to him to explore other parts of the cellar, that he might carry away as much booty as possible.

He had rendered himself amenable to the law already, and he might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, so he argued.

He was so busily occupied that he did not hear the noise of Robert's entrance into the room above, or he would at once have gone upstairs. In consequence of the delay his uncle and Robert had time to concert measures for opposing him.

Finally, not succeeding in finding more gold, he pocketed what he had found and went up the cellar stairs.

He attempted to open the door, when, to his great surprise, he found that it resisted his efforts.

"What makes the door stick so?" he muttered, not suspecting the true state of the case.

But he was quickly enlightened.

"You can't come up!" exclaimed the old man, in triumph. "I've bolted the door."

"How did he get free? He must have untied the knots," thought Ben. "Does the old idiot think he is going to keep me down here?"

"Unlock the door," he shouted, in a loud, stern voice, "or it will be the worse for you."

"Have you got the gold with you?"

"Yes."

"Then go down and leave it where you found it, and I will let you come up."

"You're a lunatic," was the reply. "Do you think I am a child? Open the door, or I will burst it open with my foot."

"You'd better not," said John, whose courage had returned with the presence of Robert and the possession of the gun.

"Why not? What are you going to do about it?" asked Ben, derisively.

"I've got help. You'll have more than one to contend with."

"I wonder if he has any one with him?" thought Ben. "I believe the old fellow is only trying to deceive me. At any rate, help or no help, it is time I was out of this hole."

"If you don't open the door before I count three," he said, aloud, "I'll burst it open."

"What shall I do?" asked Robert, in a low voice, "if he comes out?"

"If he tries to get away with the gold you must fire!" said the old man.

Robert determined only to inflict a wound. The idea of taking a human life, even under such circumstances, was one that made him shudder. He felt that gold was not to be set against life.

"One—two—three!" counted Ben, deliberately. The door remaining locked, he drew back and kicked the door powerfully. Had he been on even ground it would have yielded to the blow, but kicking from the stair beneath placed him at a disadvantage.

Nevertheless the door shook and trembled beneath the force of the attack made upon it.

"Well, will you unlock it now?" he demanded, pausing.

"No," said the old man, "not unless you carry back the gold."

"I won't do that. I have had too much trouble to get it. But if you don't unlock the door at once I may be tempted to forget that you are my uncle."

"I should like to forget that you are my nephew," said the old man.

"The old man has mastered up some courage," thought Ben. "I'll soon have him whining for mercy."

He made a fresh attack upon the door. This time he did not desist until he had broken through the panel.

Then with the whole force he could command he threw himself against the upper part of the door, and it came crashing into the kitchen.

Ben Haley leaped through the opening, and confronted his uncle, who recoiled in alarm.

The sight of the burly form of his nephew, and his stern and menacing countenance, once more made him quail.

Ben Haley looked around him, and his eyes lighted



[A BOLD INTRUDER.]

upon Robert Rushton standing beside the door with the pointed gun in his hand.

He burst into a derisive laugh, and, turning to his uncle, said:

"So this is the help you were talking about. He's only a baby; I could twist him round my finger. Just lay down that gun, boy! It isn't meant for children like you."

Though he had a weapon in his hand, many boys in Robert's situation would have been unnerved. He was a mere boy, though strong of his age. Opposed to him was a tall, powerful man, of desperate character, fully resolved to carry out his dishonest purpose, and not likely to shrink from violence, to which he was probably only too well accustomed. From the old man he was not likely to obtain much assistance, for already John's courage had begun to dwindle, and he regarded his nephew with a frightened look.

"Lay down that gun, boy!" repeated Ben Haley.

"I know you. You're the boy that rowed me across the river. You can row pretty well, but you're not quite a match for me even at that."

"This gun makes me even with you," said Robert, returning his look unflinchingly.

"Does it? Then all I can say is that when you lose it you'll be in a bad pickle. Lay it down instantly."

"Then lay down the gold you have in your pockets," said our hero, still pointing his gun at Haley.

"Good boy! Brave boy!" said the old man, approvingly.

"Look here, boy," said Haley, in quick, stern tones, "I've had enough of this nonsense. If you don't put down that gun in double quick time you'll repent it. One word—yes or no?"

"No," said Robert, resolutely.

Nosooner had he uttered the monosyllable than Haley sprang towards him with the design of wresting the gun from him. But Robert had his finger upon the trigger and fired. The bullet entered the shoulder of the ruffian, but in the excitement of the moment he only knew that he was hit, but this incensed him.

In spite of the wound he seized the musket and forcibly wrested it from our hero. He raised it in both hands and would probably in his blind fury have killed him on the spot but for the sudden opening of the outer door, and entrance of a neighbouring farmer, who felt sufficiently intimate to enter without knocking.

This changed Haley's intention. Feeling that the odds were against him, he sprang through the window, gun in hand, and ran with rapid strides toward the river.

"What's the matter?" demanded the new arrival, surveying the scene before him in astonishment.

"He's gone off with my gold," exclaimed John Nichols, recovering from his stupefaction. "Run after him—catch him!"

"Who is it?"

"Ben Haley."

"What, your nephew? I thought he was dead long ago."

"I wish he had been," said John, wringing his hands. "He's taken all my money. I shall die in the poorhouse."

"I can't understand how it all happened," said the neighbour, looking to Robert for an explanation.

"Who fired the gun?"

"I did," said our hero.

"Did you hit him?"

"I think so. I saw blood on his shirt. I must have hit him in the shoulder."

"Don't stop to talk," said John, impatiently. "Go after him and get back the gold."

"We can't do much," said the neighbour, evidently not very anxious to come into conflict with such a bold ruffian. "He has the gun with him."

"What made you let him have it?" asked John.

"I couldn't help it," said Robert. "But he can't fire it; it is unloaded, and I don't think he has any ammunition with him."

"To be sure," said John, eagerly. "You see there's no danger. Go after him, both of you; he can't hurt you."

Somewhat reassured, the neighbour followed Robert, who at once started in pursuit of the escaped burglar. He was still in sight, though he had improved the time consumed in the foregoing colloquy, and was already near the river bank. On he sped, bent on making good his escape with the money he had dishonestly acquired. One doubt was in his mind. Should he find a boat? If not the river would prove an insuperable obstacle, and he would be compelled to turn and change the direction of his flight. Looking over his shoulder, he saw Robert and the farmer in pursuit, and he clutched his gun the more firmly.

"They'd better not touch me," he said to himself. "If I can't fire the gun I can brain either or both with it."

Thoughts of crossing the river by swimming occurred to him.

A sailor by profession, he was an expert swimmer, and the river was not wide enough to daunt him; but his pockets were filled with the gold he had stolen, and gold is well known to be the heaviest of all the metals.

But nevertheless he could not leave it behind since it was for this he had incurred his present peril.

In this uncertainty he reached the bank of the river, when to his surprise and joy his eye rested upon Robert's boat.

"The boy's boat!" he exclaimed, in exultation: "by all that's lucky! I will take the liberty of borrowing it without leave."

He sprang in, and, seizing one of the oars, pushed out into the stream, first unfastening it from its moorings. When Robert and his companion reached the shore he was already floating at a safe distance.

"He's got my boat!" exclaimed our hero, in disappointment.

"So he has!" ejaculated the other.

"You're a little too late!" shouted Ben Haley, with a sneer. "Just carry back my compliments to the old idiot yonder, and tell him I left in too great a hurry to give him my acknowledgment for the gold he kindly lent me. I'll attend to it when I get ready."

He had up to this point propelled the boat from the stern by one scull. Now he took the other and commenced rowing. But here the wound, of which he had at first been scarcely conscious, began to be felt, and the first vigorous stroke brought a sharp twinge, besides increasing the flow of blood. His natural ferocity was stimulated by his unpleasant discovery, and he shook his fist menacingly at Robert, from whom he had received the wound.

"There's a reckoning coming betwixt you and me, young one," he cried, "and it'll be a heavy one. Ben Haley doesn't forget that sort of debt. The time'll come when he'll pay it back with interest. It mayn't come for years, but it'll come at last, you may be sure of that."

Finding that he could not row on account of his wound, he rose to his feet, and propelled the boat across as well as he could with one hand.

"I wish I had another boat," said Robert. "We could soon overtake him."

"Better let him go," said the neighbour. "He was always a bad one, that Ben Haley. I couldn't tell you all the bad things he did when he was a boy. He was a regular scapegrace. You must look out for him, or he'll do you a mischief somewhere to pay for that wound."

"He brought it on himself," said Robert. "I gave him warning."

He went back to the farmhouse to tell John of his nephew's escape. He was brave and bold, but the malignant glance with which Ben Haley uttered his menace gave him a vague sense of discomfort.

(To be continued.)



[THE NURSE'S WARNING.]

WINIFRED'S DIAMONDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Charmed Rubies," "The Baronet's Secret,"
&c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

*Ths. : Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon; but, oh, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes! Midsummer Night's Dream.*

PARLIAMENT had risen, after an unusually long and stormy session, and the denizens of the fashionable world of London were on the point of hurrying away from the hot and dusty city, when suddenly an announcement was made that checked the flying steps and created a pause in the hurry of departure on every side. It was the announcement of a "marriage in high life," which some few wiseacres had anticipated, but the votaries of fashion had declared could never by any possible chance take place.

The Lady Winifred Gwendoline Apreeces, the only child of the proud Earl of Llangallen, was to give her hand where her heart had long been bestowed, and wed the handsome Welsh officer, Hugh Rhysse, who, beside his commission in the army and his handsome face and form, had no possessions and no expectations except from an invalid bachelor uncle, who was as odd and whimsical as any man could well be, and quite capable of leaving his immense property to found an hospital for poodle dogs should his nephew offend him.

Consequently it was not considered a good match at all so far as the Lady Winifred was concerned. To the young officer it would bring everything—happiness, wealth, and rank combined—while from her it would take wealth and luxury and prestige, and leave only love and happiness in their stead.

The Earl of Llangallen, since he had consented to the marriage, would doubtless portion his daughter well; but who could expect the new home of the young bride to equal in point of luxury and beauty the one she was leaving? She had been brought up so tenderly, petted so constantly, what would become of her if the handsome officer, like too many others of his age and rank, should forget in time the promises he made at the altar?

No wonder that the wise friends shook their heads over this marriage and wondered more and more how the earl ever came to consent to it. So beautiful as Lady Winifred was, and so young!—only seventeen—and owning that bright and dazzling loveliness that often characterizes the blonde beauties of Wales. Meanwhile the elated lovers were almost as much startled at their exceeding good fortune as their

friends and neighbours had been at first hearing it. For three long, weary months had they sighed for each other, and sighed as they thought in vain. From the first moment of their meeting they had loved, and the Lady Winifred had rejected an earl and a baronet for her Hugh's dear sake, while the fascinating officer had steadfastly refrained from pursuing any of those flirtations with which he had usually diversified his sojourns in town, and had remained constant to the one bright star, even though its rays were not always able to shine upon him alone. He had danced with her a few blissful times, had treasured a flower or two from the curls of her silky hair, had written odes and sonnets to her, and had often enjoyed the felicity of taking her down to the carriage when they had chanced to finish the evening at the same house together.

To ask the belle of the season to marry him under these circumstances, and with such limited means as he could command, was, of course, mere madness; but he did it, nevertheless, one pleasant evening late in July, as they stood together by a fountain in a conservatory, looking at the gold fish glancing along in the water with the strong gaslight flickering over them.

He asked in a trembling voice, half doubting his own sanity, and not quite sure that he had not better dive headlong into the fountain among the fish, and thus put an end to his folly and his misery together. He asked, and, setting his teeth firmly together, waited for the reply, which he dreaded worse than the criminal in the dock dreads the sentence of death.

The answer came—not in words, however—only a sweet look and smile, and a little, soft, white hand that stole trustingly into his.

The marble pillars of the conservatory seemed to reel around him for a moment, and had he fallen into the fountain then it would have been through excess of joy. He drew the slender form close to his throbbing heart, he whispered a vow of eternal truth and fidelity in the listening ear, and, leaving his first kiss on the rosebud lips that did not refuse to meet his own, the happy Hugh Rhysse wrote himself down an engaged man for ever.

It is an awkward interview always, that little consultation with "papa," which follows so close upon the heels of the lover's avowal and acceptance. In this case it was something worse than awkward, it was positively awful, and Hugh Rhysse went to the interview with far more trepidation than he felt on that eventful morning at Balaklava when as one of the gallant "Six Hundred" he rode straight down upon the Russian guns at the word of command, and, after a few wild, delicious moments of superhuman exertion, found himself riding back

once more with the mangled remnant of the brigade—a hero in the eyes of the world for ever! Yes, that was a far less serious business than this. Having called at the time appointed in Bute Street, he sat in the library with the earl, looking so crestfallen and frightened as he explained his errand that one would never have dreamed that he had a particle of life or courage about him.

The earl's wrath was intense. The Lady Winifred Gwendoline had been destined, in his mind, to be the bride of the earl who had already laid heart and hand at her feet and had been so coldly repulsed that he kept the story of his defeat a profound secret even from her father—his boyhood's playmate, and the most intimate friend of his declining years.

Yes; to be the bride of this scion of one of old England's most noble houses the lovely girl had been destined by her parent's will.

Now this handsome popinjay of a Crimean officer, with his black eyes and curling hair, his six feet of stature, his merry laugh, and the Victoria medal on his breast, must needs thrust his penniless self in the way and upset the whole plan.

Hugh Rhysse walked out of my lord's study some twenty minutes afterwards a sadder and a wiser man, and Lady Winifred was informed by her father that very day of the high destiny that awaited her.

"But I refused the earl only last week, and I never will marry any one except Hugh Rhysse!" she cried, stamping her pretty feet upon the floor.

Thereupon the earl stamped his gouty ones, and vowed that she should obey him; and the good-natured, easy-going countess cried, and tried to reconcile the two; and poor Hugh paced slowly through St. James's Street, and up and down Hyde Park, wondering what he had better do and what would become of them both in the end.

The Lady Winifred was a "chip of the old block," and if the blue blood of the Apreeces was running in her veins the haughty spirit of her ancestors dwelt within her little heart and made it impossible for her to obey her father or resign the lover she had so recently won.

She did not pout—she did not make herself unpleasant to every one around her because her course of true love threatened to run no more smoothly than that of many another; but her lovely face grew cold and proud; her voice was seldom heard in songs—such good old Welsh songs as her father loved so well—and, as for her laugh, that music was silent; was it to be for ever?

She grew thin and pale too, and there was a sad, heartbroken look in her face that made even a stranger notice her and ask what brought it there.

Lastly, she lost her appetite; then, while the gay world of London was speculating about her falling constitution, her broken heart, and possibly her early death, her stern old father relented, caught her to his breast, kissed her, cried over her, and, saying "You jade!—you shall marry him since nothing else will content you," gave the countess leave to make the astonishing announcement which, as we have said before, set every one almost crazy to catch a sight of the bride and bridegroom, even though all their plans for the summer campaign were disarranged thereby.

Yes, parental love had triumphed over parental pride at last, and in spite of rank and wealth and fashion the youthful pair were to be made happy. The earl made only one stipulation; he gave his child away to save her health and spirits, if not her life; but he would not give her away entirely. She was still to reside with her parents after her marriage, there being room enough in Aprece House to allow of her having an entire suite of apartments for her husband and herself. These rooms were furnished by the earl with great comfort and splendour; and Aprece Grange—an old graystone farmhouse in the heart of the Welsh hills—was given to the young couple for their sole and entire use during the honeymoon.

Two or three old family servants, together with Lady Winifred's maid and Hugh Rhys's valet, were getting themselves in readiness for the residence at the Grange, and all promised fair for the happiness of the newly married pair, now that the father's consent to the betrothal and wedding had been formally obtained.

And the Lady Winifred and her lover wandered together, hand in hand, through the tropical hot-houses and the pleasant garden of Aprece House while the preparations for the bridal went hurriedly on. They could scarcely believe their own happiness, they seemed to exist in a beautiful dream, from which the slightest word, they almost feared, would awaken them. But the days and the nights passed by, and still the dream became more and more real.

The young officer, one bright evening, drew Lady Winifred out on the balcony for a moment, and holding her little hands against his beating heart whispered softly in her ear:

"A few more days, my Winifred, and you will be my own indeed, and I shall not have to say good-night and leave you as I must now."

She blushed like a rose beneath his ardent gaze. "Only a few more days, my darling! And, oh, how happy I should be if they had only gone by! My love, I shall never be truly happy till those words are said that make you mine for ever! I shall never feel safe till then—never be sure that something may not happen to snatch you from my arms in spite of all we know now."

"Nay," she whispered, gently, "nothing can separate us from each other except death. And we will pray Heaven to spare us such a trial as that. Oh, Hugh! how could I bear to lose you now!"

He kissed the tears away that came dropping from her eyes.

"My darling, I am to blame. I have made you shed these. I have no cause for my stupid forebodings, nor should I feel them except that I am too happy. I know that I do not deserve such bliss, but when we are once married, Winifred, you shall teach me how to render thanks to Heaven for its great beneficence, my little white-winged angel. Good-night, my darling, good-night!"

He kissed her tenderly two or three times, led her back into the room where her father and mother were still sitting side by side, and, placing her hand in theirs, was gone.

Earls and countesses, though on occasions they wear gemmed corsets and robes of state, are but human beings after all.

Lord Aprece talked to his daughter that night—as she sat on his knee, with her head on his bosom and her hand close clasped in that of her mother—very much as John Jones, the hedger and ditcher, talked to his daughter Betty, who was to marry Ned Giles, the cow-keeper, on the same day that gave Lady Winifred to her handsome colonel.

But, oh, poor Betty, in your humble chamber, beneath the thatched roof of the cottage, how much more brightly did the setting sun of that happy bridal day shine upon your rosy face than upon the faded cheeks and swollen eyes of her who now calls herself the daughter of one of England's proudest earls.

CHAPTER II.

Jul. Oh, know'st thou not his looks are my soul's food?

Didst thou but know the idle touch of love,
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

"AND my lord has actually given his consent to the marriage?"

So spoke the Welsh attendant who waited upon the Countess of Liangallen, in the solitude of her ladyship's chamber. She was a short, stout, and somewhat hard-favoured, middle-aged woman, though the bright dark eyes and the glossy black hair of the true Welsh peasant were still hers.

"My lord has actually given his consent to the marriage!"

There was something in her tone that made the countess turn round from the toilet-table against which she was leaning.

"Oh! is that you, Hughes?"

"Yes, my lady."

"What were you saying?"

"I was asking you about Lady Winifred, my lady."

The countess smiled.

"I suppose you have heard the good news then, Hughes?"

"I have heard what the servants were saying, my lady."

"It is not a very good match, I suppose, in one sense of the word; but I cannot forget that I married myself for pure love, and how happy I have been. That dear child has seen no one in all London that she could ever have cared for except Hugh. She told me so only this morning, and I shall be glad to see her as contented with her choice after many years of matrimony as I am with mine. I thought the earl would consent if I did but remind him of her own early days; and, though he had been like flint or marble before, he yielded at once when I spoke of them."

"It is all settled then, my lady?"

"Oh, yes."

"And when does the marriage take place, my lady?"

"Almost immediately, as soon as the lawyer can draw up the settlements."

"Before we leave town, my lady?"

"Oh, certainly. Hugh would not hear of waiting any longer, and I don't see for my part why he should. So you will have to wear a white ribbon in your cap for your nuptial, my good Hughes, and drink her health in champagne, even if you do not throw the white satin slipper after her, as I do confess I think you are more entitled to do than any one else in the house."

The woman's usually quiet face was full of strong emotion now.

"You are very kind to think, or rather to remember, that I ought to do anything for Lady Winifred," she said, in a tone that made the countess muse, for a moment, and then turn and look her straight in the face.

"Hughes."

"Yes, my lady."

"You are displeased with something?"

The woman hesitated.

"What is it? Speak out freely, and if I can remedy it I will."

"Your ladyship was kind enough to promise that Lady Winifred should make a short visit to Wales."

"Oh! Go to your farm?"

"Yes, my lady."

"She would have been glad to make the visit, I am sure; but don't you see how different it all is now?"

"I can only remember the promise, my lady. I have looked forward to it all through the winter, and it is very hard to give it up now."

The countess frowned slightly.

"My good Hughes, you must be reasonable at least. You cannot expect a young lady on the point of marriage to waste her thoughts on her nurse or a Welsh farm and a mountain hut where she has not been since her earliest childhood."

"I expect nothing. I only wish that she should remember the promise she made me—a promise is a sacred thing, and ought never to be lightly broken."

The foot of the countess began to tap impatiently on the tapestried carpet of the dressing-room floor.

"This is silly and childish in the extreme," she said, at last. "If Lady Winifred had not been engaged she would certainly have come to you. As it is you must excuse her, my good Hughes, and be sure that one of the first places she will visit when she returns will be your house."

The attendant said no more for a little time, but busied herself in preparing her lady's apparel for the night.

When she spoke again the complaining accent had by no means left her voice.

"Lady Winifred has forgotten me for several days past," she remarked. "She has not once entered my room to bid me good-morning or to wish me good-night. All the effect of these new-fangled nuptials, I suppose. Yet she need not forget her nurse because a youth like that is kneeling at her feet one half his time. Will he ever love her and care for her as I have done? I trow not."

The countess was a proud woman—a very proud woman in her way; had any other domestic in her employ dared to venture a remark upon her daughter's conduct an instant dismissal from her service would have been the reward of such temerity.

But Nurse Hughes had been her own foster-sister in the far-away days that saw her a little child, with hair as fair as Winifred's own, at play beside the mighty torrents and leaping cascades of her Welsh mountain home.

Nurse Hughes had been the confidant of her own girlish love story, she had been the trusted and faithful attendant beside her sick-bed—at Winifred's birth—the patient nurse of her only child during the long illness that threatened the mother's life.

From the moment of Lady Winifred's birth Nurse Hughes had been more than a mother to her. She had left her own infant daughter in Wales to the care of a hireling, and nourished the daughter of the countess at her own breast. She had taken the puny infant down among the Welsh valleys, and kept her there till, at the age of seven years, she returned her to her mother's arms a model of childish grace and beauty.

Eager still to devote herself to Lady Winifred, she had sought and kept the post of nurse long after the infant heiress of the long line of Apreces had out-grown her care. Her whole life in fact had been devoted to her foster-sister and that sister's child, to the detriment of her own offspring and the severing of all natural ties between them.

To such a woman as this it was difficult indeed to speak harshly, and yet the countess for her own sake could not pass over her last speech without some observation.

"You forget yourself, nurse," she said, somewhat coldly. "We know that you love Lady Winifred very greatly indeed, but even that does not give you liberty to canvas her opinions or to find fault with her for an unintentional neglect which you ought to excuse under the peculiar circumstances in which she is placed."

The attendant, of course, ventured to make no answer. But she went about her duties with a lowering brow and flashing eye that showed how much of anger still remained in her heart.

A few moments passed in perfect silence, then she asked:

"Does your ladyship require anything more?"

"Nothing more," said the countess, in the same cold tone.

The door closed gently. The nurse had gone.

For the first time in their lives the two had parted without the cordial "good-night" that always ended their daily companionship.

The countess missed the kindly adieu more than she could say. She started from her chair at first as if she would have called the woman back. But she heard the earl enter his dressing-room as she did so, and relinquished the design.

"It is very late, and she is very angry," she said to herself as she laid her head on the downy pillow. "To-morrow I will talk with her again—or Winifred shall do so—and see if we cannot get her out of this fit of the sulks. I am sorry she has been disappointed, but Winna and her husband shall both pay her a day's visit before they return here. I'm sure she ought not to ask for more than that; and, after all these years, to leave me like this. I could not have thought that Sarah Hughes had it in her heart to treat me so unkindly."

Sleep stole upon her, eyelids as she planned and thought.

Meanwhile the Lady Winifred, sitting alone in her own room, dreaming of her lover by the moonlight in the open window, was startled by a knock at her door.

She went and opened it, half-dreading to find her lady mother there with words of reproof on her lips. Seeing only her old nurse, she welcomed her with mingled affection and relief—drew her into the chamber, and, placing her in the easy-chair of velvet, sank upon a low footstool beside her, with her golden hair hanging around her shoulders like a veil of light.

The woman looked long at her with a glance of pride and affection such as her own mother might have bestowed upon her. She lifted a heavy mass of the sunny hair, passed it tenderly over her hands, and then let it fall again around the eager, blushing face.

"So my little girl is going to be married, and leave her old home and her old nurse, and everything she has known and loved from childhood—for the sake of a young man she has scarcely known three months?"

"Four, nurse!" cried Lady Winifred, eagerly—ready to vindicate herself if she could. "Four, upon my honour!"

"Ah, my darling! Such a short time, whether it

be three or four! And you have known us all so long—you have been petted and loved so here—what will you do if this gay young lover of yours should grow cold, and neglect, and perhaps abuse you?"

Lady Winifred's blue eyes opened widely. "Oh, nurse! He never can! He never will! You don't know how much he loves me!"

The elder woman shook her head doubtfully. "Oh! I was once young, and beautiful—so every one told me, though I was not fair like you. I had a lover—fair and golden-haired, and beautiful as the dawn of day. He won me for his own—and when I was his wife I thought my cup of happiness was too full. But in one short year—before my child was born—my lover husband grew into a tyrant and a brute. He was false and cruel to me—he beat me—he reviled me. Oh, Heaven! how much misery I passed through in those days! He left me at last. Then my child was born! I have never seen him since—and only hope and pray I may never set eyes on him again. That was how my love match turned out, my dear."

"Poor nurse! I am so sorry for you! It must have been a dreadful trial! That was why you left your child—his child—came here to take care of me. I have often wondered how you could leave your own baby for me—but I see it all now. You could not have loved his child after he had been so cruel to you."

A strange expression of pain and sadness and remorse flitted over the dark face of the nurse.

"Child, I never loved anything on earth—not even him or that neglected infant—as I have loved you. The countess was my foster-sister, you know, and it would be strange indeed if I did not care for her child. Now I have spoken of the one great sorrow of my life to warn you, my dear. Take time to think before you marry this young man. They are hurrying you into it too fast, my child. Come down to my little home in Wales with me, as you promised long ago to do when this season was at an end; then you will have time to think it all over, and see if you really love him or not."

Lady Winifred's blue eyes grew misty with unshed tears.

"Nurse, I have thought. My heart told me the moment that I met him how it would all be if he ever stooped to love me."

"Stooped! You the Earl of Llangallen's daughter, and he simply an officer with no fortune! Do you talk about his stooping to you, my darling?"

"Oh, but he is so noble and so good; and after all his family is quite as old as ours, though he has no title."

"Ay—I had forgotten. Oh, my child, remember all that I have done and sacrificed for you in the course of my life, and grant this one request. Go with me to my little home, if only for one week, and think this over. I will bring you back at the end of that time if," she added, with a sudden change of tone and manner, "if all I have to tell you do not make you wish to give him up of your own accord, and stay with me."

Lady Winifred was gentle as a dove, and she loved her nurse tenderly. But now there was almost a look of anger in the large blue eyes as she raised them to her companion's face.

"Nurse, you forget yourself strangely! How could I possibly leave town with you on the very eve of my marriage? And what could you possibly have to tell me that would change my mind or make me love Hugh one whit less than I do now?"

Again that strange expression passed over the nurse's face.

She began to speak, then checked herself suddenly and sat silent with her eyes fixed upon the ground.

"You talk of your own sad married life and I am ready to console you—to grieve with you over your lost dream of happiness," the young girl went on.

"But how can that affect me beyond making me sad for you? Hugh loves me dearly. He cannot change or grow cold towards me unless he changes his whole nature—and at the worst, if the worst should come—only it never can—at the worst, he could not be cruel to me as your husband was. My rank would protect me, even if I should not be living in my father's home."

"Ah, child, don't be sure of that. Servants see many a strange thing as they go from house to house to live; and I have known more than one earl who beat his countess. Yes—actually struck her hard blows, as a low-bred man might strike his wife. Human nature, when it is bad and cruel, is the same in a peer or a pauper—and you must not fancy, my dear—"

A red spot rose on Lady Winifred's cheek, and the blue eyes flashed brightly now.

"That will do, nurse! It is very late and I do not like to hear such things. Good-night."

The woman rose from her seat with a bitter smile.

"You wish me to go, Lady Winifred. You order me from your presence, do you?"

The young girl looked at her in calm and cold surprise.

"Nurse! Do you know what you are saying—to whom you are talking?"

"Certainly! No one knows that better than I!" replied the woman, with a low laugh.

"Please to leave the room."

The habit of long and instinctive obedience prevailed, and the woman turned to go as soon as she heard the order given in that cold, offended tone, but at the door she paused for a moment.

"Lady Winifred, I seem to be very unfortunate tonight. I have talked with the countess about your marriage till she almost turned me from her room. I have talked with you now till you quite do it. You are putting a greater affront on me than you know; but never mind that, I forgive you heartily, but I must beg you once more to pause and think of what you are doing. If you will only go with me one short week."

"It is impossible. But I do not wish to hurt or pain you, nurse, for you have always been very kind and devoted to me. So we will say good-night, like good friends, now, after all that has passed. Before we return home from our wedding trip my husband and myself will come and see you, and spend a long day with you, at your Welsh cottage, if you like."

"You persist then? You disregard my entreaty—my warning—my earnest prayer—and will go on with this thing?"

"Certainly. Now, nurse, dear, do not say a word more. Do not make me angry with you again, just as I am about leaving you and my home together. Good-night."

"Good-night, Lady Winifred. Remember that whatever may happen now I am not at fault, I have done my best to make you pause, and you would not do so. Don't blame me, now, whatever may come to you."

"Nay, I am not afraid that Hugh will ever be unkind to me or beat me," said the young girl, with a gay laugh as she closed the door upon her visitor and began to prepare for bed.

The nurse, left to herself, went slowly to her own room.

It was handsomely and even luxuriously furnished; everything about the apartment showed that the comfort of its occupant was a matter of thought and study to the owners of the mansion. And at Apreece Castle, Apreece Lodge, and Apreece Grange a similar room awaited her, so that whenever she travelled with the family she might feel herself a person of consequence and as much at home as they themselves were.

But this affectionate thought for her comfort seemed to move her little on this night. Her brow was dark—her face stern—and the muttered words that fell now and then from her lips showed that her mind was ill at ease.

Placing the silver candlestick on a marble taper-stand, she sank into an easy-chair, leaned her head upon her hands, and thought.

After a long time she arose, and, drawing the curtain from before the window, looked out. It was a lovely night—for night in London is strangely beautiful in the summer time. The silver moon rode high in the clear blue heavens, her light flooding street and square. As the woman stood there gazing the clock tolled the hour of four.

Four o'clock. The household, or at least a part of it, would be astir by seven, for the earl kept early hours, and expected every one about him to do so. It was time for her to bestir herself if she were to carry out the purpose she had that night marked.

Swiftly and silently she took her wearing apparel from the tall mahogany wardrobe and the mahogany chest of drawers, and packed two great trunks which stood in one corner of the room with their canvas cases already drawn around them. When each was filled she locked and strapped it down, tacked a directed card to the canvas top, and shoved it back in its place.

Then, dressing herself in a plain black silk, she filled a carpet-bag with such articles of the toilet as she would require, and, putting on a black straw bonnet and a black shawl with a soft, silvery-looking border, she slipped her keys into her pocket, drew on her kid gloves and stood ready to depart.

For one moment she gazed around the room, and her face worked and changed.

She had been so happy there when she had accompanied the family in their brief visits to town during Lady Winifred's childhood. How often the little fair-haired girl had sat in yonder low seat by the hearth to hear fairy stories told till that dreadful nine o'clock struck and the under nurse came to take her to bed! How often had the countess sought that snug retreat, and shared a friendly cup of tea

with her foster-sister before going to some grand party—the folds of her satin dress falling around her, and her jewels flashing on her neck and arms in firelight and lamplight as she sat and talked. Nay, the earl himself had often found them there together, and paused for a few moments to share the chat or the feast, ere he took his beautiful wife down to the carriage! How happy they had been!

Now she was leaving it for ever. A few more days and there would be no possibility of her returning to the old times or the old ways—or, indeed, to the old friendship or the old love.

She leaned against the massive carved bed-post, and her tears fell fast as she thought of all that had been and all that must be now.

"I am a most miserable woman!" she moaned, "and Heaven is punishing me now for the sin of my youth; there is no more peace or love or hope for me on earth, neither for me nor mine!... Heaven help us all!"

With a violent effort she turned away, and after one last, long, lingering look closed the door of her lost Eden behind her.

She still carried the candle, for the upper hall was dark, though in the lower one the moon was shining brightly through the fan-shaped window over the door.

She went noiselessly along the corridor to Lady Winifred's room. She opened the door cautiously and looked in. The young girl was buried in a profound slumber, and she stood at the bedside gazing upon her with a face full of grief and love. One little white hand laid outside the silken coverlet. The nurse bent down and a kiss and a tear lay side by side upon the open palm.

"Heaven bless you, my child, and show you how to forgive me when you know all!" she moaned as she turned away.

At the door of her foster-sister's room she paused once more. She did not dare to go in, for the earl was a light sleeper, and would have been roused in an instant if she had made the attempt. But she slid a folded paper under the door, and kissed the silver knob where the hand of the countess had so often rested—kissed it with tears in her eyes and a prayer for pardon in her heart.

All was over now. The last silent farewell was spoken and she had only to go her way.

Downstairs she went softly past the great drawing-rooms, silent in their splendour, to the lower hall, where she placed her candle on the table and tapped lightly at the library door.

The next instant the door opened, and a tall footman made his appearance, fully dressed but yawning woefully.

"I've been sleeping so soundly in that velvet arm-chair that I really thought I had overdone it till I heard your step just now on the stairs, Mrs. Hughes," he said, in a low tone. "You really must leave us at this unearthly hour to catch the train?"

"I really must, Thomas; and I am very much obliged to you for getting up to let me out before any one was astir."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Hughes. You've done me many a good turn before this, and I've never had a chance before to pay you back. Oh—about your boxes?"

"I'll write if I want them. Thank you; and good-bye."

"Good-bye. This morning air strikes chill, doesn't it?"

Thomas put up bolts and bars again as noiselessly as he could, wondering in his own mind "what the old lady was up to," while Mrs. Hughes, after one long look at the high, blank walls of the house, walked swiftly away in the moonlight, turning towards "the city" as she went.

(To be continued.)

SOUND ADVICE.—It is certainly a great disparagement to virtue, and learning itself, that those very things which only make men useful in the world should incline them to leave it. This ought never to be allowed to good men, unless the bad had the same moderation, and were willing to follow them into the wilderness. But if one shall contend to get out of employment, while the other strives to get into it, the affairs of mankind are likely to be in so ill a posture that even the good men themselves will hardly be able to enjoy their very retreat in security.

ROSES.—Roses were getting scarce for the French perfumers, therefore a representative of the Paris perfumers asked the cultivators at Puteaux to name the price which would remunerate them for the cultivation of the roses; they replied, "If we receive one hundred francs (four pounds sterling) per hundred kilos, we will replant our fields." The conditions were accepted by the perfumers, and these rose

fields are to bloom again as of old. At Adrianople the rose fields extended over some 12,000 or 14,000 acres. The season for picking the roses is from the latter part of April to the beginning of June, and at sunrise the plains look like a vast garden full of life and fragrance, with hundreds of Bulgarian boys and girls gathering the blooms into baskets and sacks. These rose fields generally produce abundant crops, and constitute the most important source of wealth in the district.

LORD DANE'S ERROR.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHRENY did not dare permit Lord Dane and Heath to meet. He followed Adèle from the hotel, and held a private interview with her on his own behalf.

He had still in his possession the money from the last cheque his master had given him to expend for brave little Perdita.

He paid a large portion of it into Adèle's hand, and promised her as much more if she accomplished successfully the errand upon which he wished to send her.

Adèle promised without the smallest hesitation, and was put in possession of such details as were necessary.

She started for the Normandy chateau in an hour's time.

Lord Dane—thanks to the skilful management of his man—did not leave Paris until the following morning.

Adèle reached her destination late in the afternoon of the day succeeding that on which Baron Chandos and Heath had held the conversation already narrated.

The baron had made an excuse to take Heath out for the day. He looked so miserable and was altogether in such a reckless mood that he did not dare trust him with his wife, lest he should pour into her horrified ears that disgraceful story of his deceit toward her.

"The papers may come," thought the baron, "or at least such news of them as will justify me in telling them both who Volney Heath is, and when she knows that she can hardly hold out long against forgiving him, badly as he has deceived her."

It seemed as though Heath had a presentiment of what was coming. Baron Chandos had serious difficulty in keeping him from home for the day, and when they at last entered the grounds of the chateau Heath spurred his horse in advance of the baron, and, forgetting even to be courteous in his anxiety to learn if all was well, hurried up to the entrance, leaped from his horse and, flinging the reins to a servant, entered without waiting for his friend.

He glanced about him anxiously as he traversed the hall. Not a servant was in sight. He darted up the long, carpeted staircase and looked into a small saloon, which Sybil sometimes occupied at this hour of the day. No one was there. An embroidery frame stood near a window, and an open book was on the floor.

"She is in her dressing-room of course," thought Heath, his lips trembling with excitement as he hurried on breathlessly. "She is just now dressing for dinner."

He knocked at the door of his wife's apartments.

Her maid opened it. Her ladyship was in the drawing-room, she said.

"Has any one been here—I mean has there been any calls—any one to see her ladyship?"

The girl looked surprised, more at his strange manner, however, than his questions.

"Yes, a gentleman had called she believed."

"A gentleman?"

Volney's voice was husky.

"You did not learn who he was?"

"Some old acquaintance of yourself and my lady, I think. She called him so, and seemed much excited."

"Ah."

Volney drew his breath sharply.

"My lady is anxious to see you as soon as you have made your dinner toilet," the girl went on.

"To see me—yes, to be sure."

His head drooped, then was lifted again, desperately.

"Whatever happens," he muttered, "she is my wife, she shall never marry him."

He hurried to his dressing-room, and made a hasty toilet.

He was very pale, and his eyes glittered as he turned towards the drawing-room.

At the door he paused and leaped a moment against the pictured wall to subdue his emotion. Rallying again, he passed in.

It was a smaller apartment—a sort of saloon opening from the main room, and shut off from it by a broad arch, heavily curtained with double draperies of the thickest silk.

Sybil was standing before the fire at the moment he entered.

She wore a dress of white silk, with jet clasps at throat and wrists, and a white flower in her hair, which was dressed as usual, without other ornament.

She looked up as her husband entered. She turned a radiant, beaming, gloriously beautiful face towards him, and extended her little hand, making a gesture as she did so to the figure opposite.

It was not Lord Dane who stood there, but the owner of the chateau, the man of whom Heath had hired it—a Monsieur Devigne, who had come into the country on some business and given them a call.

Sybil had invited him to remain and dine with them.

Volney could scarcely articulate, the reaction was so great from despair to a freedom from fear—for the present certainly.

Sybil was looking unusually lovely, and was in exuberant spirits.

Volney retained his clasp of her hand as though he feared to let it go. At the first moment when he could, unobserved, he whispered in her ear:

"I have something to tell you, Sybil, of the utmost importance, something upon which more than my life depends."

Sybil looked at him, struck by his vehemence.

"What has happened?" she asked. "Cannot you wait until after dinner?"

"Must I? It is something I ought to have told you long, long ago."

A faint shadow crossed Sybil's lovely face. Then she smiled.

"I don't know what to make of you, Talbot."

"Talbot!" He repeated the name after her almost fiercely, his false name. "You will know when I have told you this; it is a confession I have to make to you, Sybil. Oh! great Heaven! what a confession!"

His emotion was getting the better of him. She saw that he was fearfully agitated.

"A confession?" she slowly repeated after him, an indefinable fear touching her.

At this moment Baron Chandos entered the room.

He read the scene at a glance.

"Madman," he muttered, "he takes everything at a disadvantage."

He joined the pair with a hurried step, and offered his compliments to Sybil in the most profuse and elaborate style. Heath thus interrupted could only draw back, gnawing his quivering lip and regarding Chandos with angry eyes.

"Are you mad?" the baron said, in an aside, as he offered Sybil his arm; "you are in no state to talk to your wife."

He led Sybil smilingly back to M. Devigne. She glanced at her husband but yielded to the baron's guidance.

Heath remained behind, long enough to compose his features somewhat, yet not enough but that his wife turned every now and then a look of keen inquiry upon him.

They went out to dinner presently. Whatever Heath lacked in gaiety was made up by the lively efforts of the baron and M. Devigne. Heath ate sparingly, but drank freely of wine.

When Sybil rose to leave the table her husband himself conducted her to the door, longing too to accompany her.

"Let me speak with you alone the first moment it is possible," he said, in a low voice, his deep eyes fastened upon her face an instant entreatingly.

Sybil glanced at M. Devigne and Baron Chandos, then back to her husband's eager, pallid face.

"Something very serious must have happened," she thought, "to make him look that way."

Then she looked at him, smiling lovingly, and said, also in low tones:

"Dearest, I will make it possible very soon."

She floated away, and her husband's eyes followed her with a passionate anguish in their depths. Was it only the thought of what he must tell her that made his heart so leaden that moment, or had he a presentiment that the tender light of those fond, sweet, worshipped eyes would so soon be changed to him, perhaps for ever?

Adèle had reached the vicinity of the chateau at nightfall. Her message was to the present master and mistress of this elegant abode, and her charge had been to deliver it the instant she arrived. Adèle was, however, a true French woman, with the element of intrigue largely developed, and possessing enough vanity, egotism and envy for two.

The "sixteen-year-old courtesa," as she had been fond of terming Sybil, had never been an object of

worship to her former maid. On the contrary, Sybil's imperiousness had made for her an enemy in the person of Adèle, who instead of asking for the master of the house now, to give her message to, inquired for Louise, Sybil's present maid. Through her she obtained admission to Sybil's private apartments, and was there waiting for "her ladyship" when she went thither from the dining-room instead of returning to the saloon.

Adèle wished to secure for herself the sight of the humiliation of that mistress whom she had so long hated.

Sybil had decided to come to her own apartments and send for her husband to meet her there. She did not feel on ceremony with Baron Chandos and M. Devigne.

She entered with a thoughtful look on her lovely face. At the unexpected sight of Adèle an unpleasant pang smote her, either because the remembrance of her former maid was connected with unpleasant associations, or because the woman's thoughts spoke too plainly in her eyes.

Adèle stood up.

"My lady," she said, humbly enough, but she had to drop her eyes to hide the exultation that shone in them.

Sybil looked round for Louise.

"Who gave you permission to bring this person here?" she demanded.

Louise looked distressed.

"I understood that you sent her here, my lady, to wait until you came."

Adèle pressed forward.

"I had business with your ladyship," she said, fixing her bold eyes on Sybil's with an expression that arrested her speech; "business of such a private and dangerous nature that I knew you would thank me for making as little noise as possible in coming to you."

Sybil looked at the woman as if she thought she was crazy.

"Shall I go on—shall I speak before Louise, or will you send her out first?"

Sybil hesitated an instant, then, moving to where she could put her hand upon a little silver call-bell, she said:

"Go into the next room, Louise, but come the instant I ring. I will hear what this person has to say."

She spoke haughtily, yet with a tone of perplexity.

Louise left the room, casting a look of doubtful anger at Adèle, who only nodded and threw up her head impatiently.

"I am ready," Sybil said, coldly.

"My lady, do you know how your father died?"

Sybil started, and her lips fluttered a little.

"You said you came here to see me on private and dangerous business."

"I did. I came to tell you how your father died."

Sybil sank into a chair.

"What can you know about it?"

"I did not know till Tuesday last. Lord Dane's own valet told me then, and sent me down here to warn you, and also to unmask to you the man you have married, believing him to be the great Earl of Dane. Your husband is an impostor, madam. Far from being a lord, he is not even a gentleman, judging by his actions. His true name is Heath, and he has cheated and tricked you from the very beginning."

Sybil sat like one turning to stone.

It was as though some strange and unacknowledged misgiving and doubt in her own soul had at last taken shape.

Singular and unauthorized as the revelation would have seemed, coming from such a source, and in such a style, something within her own breast told her it was true.

She forgot Adèle's ambiguous but significant language concerning her father in the overwhelming conviction that she had told her the truth about her husband.

Without speaking, and after so dead a silence that Adèle was frightened, she reached and touched the bell to summon Louise.

Louise was appalled at the change in that beautiful face.

"My lady," she began.

Sybil checked her.

"Go and find your master and ask him to come to me here—do you understand? instantly."

Louise left the room.

It was not long before steps were heard approaching.

Volney knocked lightly and then came in, a look of desperate courage in his eyes.

He had come, resolved to confess the whole truth at last, cost what it might.

He was not prepared to see Adèle, to find himself

forestalled, his last chance for grace stolen from him by this creature, for whom he had so long entertained a half-fearful aversion.

But he recognized it all in a glance—Sybil's stony face, the Frenchwoman's sullen yet wicked, exulting, and defiant looks.

He put his hand quickly to his forehead. Then he addressed Sybil.

"You sent for me," he said, in a hoarse voice.

Sybil looked up.

There was neither tenderness nor smiling now in the stern glance that met his.

"Are you Lord Dane or Volney Heath?" she asked, icily.

"I am Volney Heath," he said, after an instant's pause, his lips shaking, and an awful pallor on his face.

Sybil looked at him steadily an instant.

"Was that what you were going to tell me? Was that what you meant by confessing?"

"Yes."

He could only utter the monosyllable.

"And you have deceived me, lived a falsehood all this while? I find it very hard to believe it, and yet there are many things which I remember now which convince me that it is so. Why did you deceive me so?"

"I loved you."

"Do you think I could love you after I knew of this?"

"I hoped to make you love me enough to forgive me—wait a moment, Sybil—I know now how mad and impossible was the hope I cherished. My falsehood and unworthiness have always been like a wall between us. I know that never for one poor moment have I had the love of the girl I perilled my soul for."

One ray shot from Sybil's lovely eyes at these words, but Heath, standing with his shamed head drooped, did not meet it.

Suddenly she looked at Heath again.

"How much of what you told me regarding my father was true?"

Heath clenched his teeth.

"Very little," he said, in a desperate voice.

"Was any of it?"

"No."

"The letters?"

"I wrote them."

"All?"

"Every one."

"The one from Sherwood Terrace? the—the one from on shipboard?"

"Yes."

"Is he not dead, then?" she cried, taking a single step towards him.

Heath looked up. He met that wild, longing, eager look, and it flashed over him as Heaven's light might flash in the eyes of a lost soul that if it had been in his power to say truly "He lives" his wife would have forgiven him all the rest. But he could not. His head fell, a hand of ice seemed to clutch his heart.

"He is dead!" he said, and covered his face with his hands.

There was a deathly silence some moments. Not even Adèle, much as she longed to speak, dared break it.

Then Sybil spoke once more, her tones sharpened, but clear and cold.

"How did he die? What killed him?"

Heath gasped for breath.

"How could he ever tell her? He did not speak at all."

His silence seemed almost to frenzy Sybil. She threw a wild glance about her, and saw Adèle, and suddenly a dreadful blindness seemed to pass before her vision. She remembered Adèle's singular words at the opening of the interview with her. She lifted her hand.

"Repeat to me," she commanded, "what you said you came here to tell me."

Heath's hands dropped from his face.

Adèle started, and looked towards the door, as though she would flee through it. Then she compressed her thin lips and turned towards Heath. She had to summon all the brazen effrontery at her command before she could speak, with the agony of Heath's eyes before her, though indeed he was not looking at her, but at his wife, looking as if he knew he was looking his last upon that worshipped face.

"I was sent here by Mr. Cheeny, Lord Dane's own man," Adèle said. "I was sent to warn you that the earl is on his way to have you arrested for the murder of Mr. Vassar!"

A wild, unearthly and awful shriek broke into her last words.

It came from Sybil's lips, and for a moment that beautiful face was convulsed with a horror and anguish so frightful and heartrending that both her husband and the maid sprang to her side.

She repulsed them both, and when Heath persisted, for she looked as though she could not stand alone, she turned upon him fierce and bitter as hate itself.

"If you ever put your hand upon me again," she uttered, "I will kill you."

An unnatural calmness took possession of Heath from that moment.

He drew back, and left her supporting her tottering limbs by clinging to the chair in which she had been sitting.

He moved and spoke like an automaton.

"It is true," he said, slowly, "that your father was murdered at Lenseleigh—that he was slain under circumstances which miserably involve me; but I did not kill him."

"I swear to you, Sybil, by all my lost hopes of one day winning your love, that I would have died myself sooner than lift my hand against him. He came to Lenseleigh and insisted upon my promising to give you up or else he would expose me to you. I fancied you were just beginning to love me, and I refused."

"We quarrelled bitterly, then upon pretence of talking over matters with him I got him to go with me to a lonely little house in a remote part of the park, and shut him in there. I arranged everything for him to be released as soon as we were safely away."

"I left the key with my foster-sister. When she went to let him out the door was already open. Some one had killed him. It was not I. Can you not believe me, Sybil?"

The answer came after a while in a voice so hollow and changed that he could not recognize it.

"No. After all the falsehoods you have told—after that long falsehood you acknowledge to have lived—would you hesitate at new ones? Go away and leave me with my broken heart. I feel as if a fiend had come to me clothed as an angel of light."

She was not looking at him. She spoke with averted face, her little shaking hand uplifted between him and her with a gesture of abhorrence.

Heath gazed at her in a sort of solemn despair.

"It is just," he murmured. "I deserve it all."

Then he said, humbly: "I will obey you, Sybil; I will go away. You shall never see my face again. Only say that you forgive me first."

There was no answer.

"Some day," he resumed, after a pause, "my innocence of this crime will be made known. I won't ask you to forgive that, if you believe I did it, but say that you forgive me the rest before I go; say that you forgive me all the other wrong I did you. Won't you say it, Sybil?"

There was silence, and then she said:

"I would say it if I could feel it, but I don't, I can't. Leave me if you do not want to drive me entirely mad."

Volney Heath turned slowly towards the door. There he paused and looked back with an awful wistfulness in his sunken eyes. He would have given much for one last sight of that beautiful face which had been Heaven to him so long, but he was not to have it. Sybil's face was turned quite away from him. He sighed heavily and passed on, closing the door behind him.

(To be continued.)

FIGHTING WITH FATE.

CHAPTER XV.

SIR HUGH TREGARON was well aware that Darrel Moer had been a frequent visitor at the Red House during the previous winter, and that Moer had been an especial favourite with Mrs. Glint, despite his well-known reputation as a *débauché* and *roué*. The prospects of Darrel Moer had been sufficiently dazzling to blind the eyes of the captain's wife to all his faults, and to render her anxious to secure him as her son-in-law.

So long, therefore, as Honor received Moer's visits at the Red House, and while under the chaperonage of Mrs. Glint, even Sir Hugh, who would have allowed no unclean thing to approach near to the young girl whom he secretly loved, could suspect no harm and offer no objection.

But when, as now, he beheld him sneaking like a red Indian upon the track of Honor Glint's maid, following the girl like some sleuth-hound to her home, Sir Hugh Tregaron knew that he meant mischief.

Honor Glint was no longer in the safe shelter of the Red House, no longer under the protection of Mrs. Glint, and it seemed probable to the young Cornish baronet that Moer had discovered the young girl's homelessness, and intended to derive some advantage from the fact that she was unprotected.

"I'll keep my eye on him," he thought. "No

harm can come to Honor through him while I live. It is evident that he does not know Honor's address, and that he is seeking it in this underhand manner."

Compressing his lips closely, the young baronet walked onward at a leisurely pace, keeping Darrel Moer at a distance of some rods in advance of him, and not losing sight of the sauntering figure of Honor's maid.

The wind was blowing freshly over the bare sands. The donkey riders, followed by a few old women and boys, were already retreating before the incoming tide. The boats that had lain near the pier-head high and dry were already rocking upon the quickening waters.

The promenade, swept by the chill wind, was becoming deserted.

Sir Hugh drew up his coat collar with an involuntary shiver.

Meanwhile Honor's maid, unconscious of the double pursuit, continued her journey homeward, a basket on her arm. She had been to some little shop in the neighbourhood of the railway station, and was now going home, taking a circuitous route in order that she might look upon the gray sands, the iron pier, which is a mile in length, and the promenade, which is always frequented, and, at certain seasons, is covered with gay throngs.

Passing up the promenade for a considerable distance, Lucky turned off into a pleasant street and quickened her steps.

The pursuers quickened theirs also. The girl led them a brisk walk, and they found themselves at length in the Manchester Road, a pleasant, quiet street, bordered with villas and cottages of more or less pretension, and nearly all set in the midst of pleasant gardens.

Lucky Banner paused before one of these cottages, opened the gate and passed swiftly up the walk, disappearing within the house.

Darrel Moer came up to the little gate and paused, but only for a moment. Then he also opened the gate and sauntered up the walk.

Resounded the old-fashioned knocker upon the door and waited for admission.

He was thus waiting when Sir Hugh Tregaron came up and halted at the gate.

The young Cornish baronet looked narrowly at the house and at the figure in the porch. The cottage was a neat little building of stucco with a double front. In one of the lower windows was a card, bearing the announcement, "Lodgings to Let."

There was a bit of lawn in front, through which the original sands upon which the town was built cropped out at intervals, and there were a few shrubs.

Trees are almost unknown at Southport, the thin soil in which the grasses and flowers take root having all to be imported in cartloads and spread upon the sand.

But to make up for the natural deficiencies of rocks, stones and trees, in a region of sands, this little cottage, like many greater and less houses in Southport, boasted a profusion of rocks under its windows, and around its porch, forming a "rockery," in which, could they have been covered with water, a sea-gnome might have dwelt contentedly.

There was also upon the small lawn a huge root of a tree, upturned and sprawling, looking like some strange monster.

Both rocks and tree root had been brought from a distance, and were supposed to add the charms of a bold, rocky, and well-shaded country to the superabundant advantages of the flat and sandy town.

This cottage rejoiced in a distinctive name, and was called, as an inscription over the gate informed Sir Hugh, by the title of "Oak Cottage."

Sir Hugh had time to observe these peculiarities before the door opened, and an elderly woman appeared to give Mr. Moer admittance.

"There are other people in the house," thought the young Cornishman, "and he will not dare to make himself obtrusive. I must see Honor, but I will wait until Moer comes out. She will send him away directly."

He walked on up the street in the gathering dusk.

Meanwhile Darrel Moer, having been admitted into the cottage by the elderly woman whom Sir Hugh had dimly seen in the doorway, halted in the little cramped hall, and inquired for Miss Glint.

"Miss Glint does not intend to see visitors, sir," declared the woman, an expression of doubt upon her severe and prim countenance. "She has come to Southport for change of air, and—"

"She will see me," interrupted Mr. Moer, composedly, removing his great-coat and hat. "I have just come from Bolton—from Mrs. Glint—and I have a message for Miss Glint. Show me the way to her rooms."

"Her rooms are on the ground floor here, sir. The door at your left, sir, at your very elbow, opens into Miss Glint's parlour. If you will give me your name I will ascertain if the young lady will see you."

"Thank you," responded Moer, "but I'm a very old friend of Miss Gint, and I prefer to surprise her by appearing unexpectedly. I won't trouble you any farther."

Unheeding the startled and ominous expression upon the woman's countenance, Darrel Moer, with an easy smile upon his dark face, rapped lightly upon the door at his left, and without waiting for any response, boldly opened it and entered Honor's parlour. He closed the door behind him abruptly, in the face of the shocked lodging-house keeper, who had intended to follow him into Honor's presence, and he turned the key in the lock.

The small parlour was unattended at the moment of his entrance, but there were evidences of a refined occupation of it and of a recent feminine presence within it.

The room was fitted up after the usual manner of lodging-house sitting-rooms, with a faded Brussels carpet, a worn hair-cloth-covered couch, and hair-cloth-covered chairs; but since Honor had come into possession of it an air of brightness and coziness had been imparted to the grim furniture by bright chintz slip covers, and a warm-coloured rug had been laid upon the floor. The glowing coal fire in the polished grate filled the room with ruddy gleams. Honor's pretty portable desk of malachite lay open upon a table near one of the windows, and upon the same table was a dainty work-box, also open, with a strip of ruffling in which a needle glittered lying across it, and with a tiny gold thimble and scissors case beside it.

A few books belonging to Honor were scattered here and there, and filled a little swinging case of folding shelves which Honor had brought from the Red House. There were upon the walls some treasured pictures, the work of Honor's own hands at school, or the gifts of friends. Before the fire was drawn up a little tea-table, ready for the evening meal, and this last feature completed the home-like appearance of the room.

Darrel Moer had finished his survey of the apartment, and was still standing near the door, when the door of the inner room opened, and Honor entered the little lighted parlour.

She was dressed in black, and was very pale, but she was by no means the broken-down young creature Darrel Moer had expected to see. He had left Yorkshire that morning, as we have described, and had proceeded to Bolton, and to the Red House. He had been accorded an interview with Mrs. Gint, who had informed him of Honor's departure from her home in much the same terms in which the same fact had been previously communicated to Sir Hugh Tregaron.

He had traced Honor to Southport, as Sir Hugh had done, and had chanced to see Honor's maid almost immediately upon leaving the station. He had followed her with the success we have seen, and had thought to find his young wife heartbroken and utterly despairing.

He experienced a sense of chagrin as he saw that the calm sweetness of her brows was unruined, that the vivid splendour of her black eyes was undimmed, that the tender, sensitive mouth was more resolute than of old, and that the bright piquancy of her spirited face was not lessened. She showed, indeed, that she had suffered—was still suffering with that intensity possible only to natures like hers—but she bore her sorrow bravely, hiding it in her heart that mortal eyes might not look upon it.

On entering she did not see the sinister figure just inside her door and leaning carelessly against it, but as she approached the fire Darrel Moer stepped forward, revealing his presence.

Honor did not start, nor even show surprise, at thus suddenly beholding him. Perhaps she had expected him to seek her sooner or later. But she retreated a few steps before he could speak, and called to her maid, who hurriedly emerged also from the inner room.

The diadem of the faithful Lucky was exhibited in her paler and in the low whisper that came from her lips as she beheld the enemy of her young mistress.

"To what am I indebted for the honour of this visit, Mr. Moer?" demanded his young bride, haughtily.

"Is there anything so strange in the fact that I should desire to visit you?" inquired Moer, irritably and reproachfully. "Have I not a right to visit you? Do you not belong to me?"

"No, I do not belong to you!" cried Honor, her young voice ringing, her eyes flashing. "You have no right to follow me to this place. I demand that you leave me immediately."

"I have something to say to you that is of importance, Honor," said Moer, changing his tone. "Send out that idiot of a girl. I want no witnesses to comment upon every word I shall speak."

"You can have nothing to say to me that Lucky

may not hear," said Honor, calmly. "I shall never see you alone and without witnesses, Darrel Moer. If you have anything to say speak quickly, and in the presence of my maid."

Moer frowned, but drew nearer his young bride. "Do you forget, Honor," he asked, "that you are pledged to me by yow, which you cannot break? Do you forget that you are my lawful wife?"

The girl's features quivered with sudden pain. "Ah, no, I do not forget," she murmured. "The memory is like a blight upon me."

"You abandoned me at the very altar," said Moer. "With the vows fresh upon your lips to love, honour, and obey me, you fled from me and hid yourself that I might not easily find you. Is it thus you keep your marriage vows, Honor—those vows which are registered in heaven?"

"Do you fling the blame upon me?" demanded Honor, her pale face all aglow. "Do you dare accuse me of wrong-doing, Darrel Moer? I went to the altar with you, not loving you—Heaven help me!—but trusting you, grateful to you, and with a heart so full of tenderness for you that you might easily have won it to yourself for ever. But you—you repented on the very day that your infatuation for me had led you so far. I can understand now your silence, your strange manner during that ride to the chapel. When your friend came to you with letters, and you took him into the inner room adjoining the vestry and showed to him all the villainies of your soul, and declared your horror at the marriage—with me, which prevented you from paying suit to some lady of higher rank and greater wealth than I can ever boast, I heard every word you uttered. Those words dropped upon my writhing soul like burning coals. They outraged my pride, my modesty, and they turned every possibility of tenderness towards you that was in my nature into a loathing and detestation too great for words. You unmasked yourself, Darrel Moer, and you have yourself to blame that I shrink from the loathsome object you have shown yourself to be."

Darrel Moer's face whitened with rage, but he forced himself to speak calmly.

He was determined to secure the certificates of their marriage now in Honor's possession, and fair means were to be thoroughly tried before resorting to foul ones.

"Honor," he said, hoarsely, "can you not make allowance for the state of mind I was in when I uttered those words that stung you so cruelly? I had just received a letter from my uncle's business agent, informing me that I was no longer my uncle's heir—no longer next in the Waldemar succession—but that I was likely to be forced at my age, with my habits, to earn my own living?—Conceive the effect upon a mind like mine of a revelation like that! I was cowardly, I own—base, mean, cruel if you will—but I never dreamed that you could hear me, or that you would abandon me for a few hasty words. I repent, Honor, and I beg you to forgive me."

"I forgive you, Mr. Moer," said Honor, coldly.

"You will allow me to claim you as my wife, which you legally are?"

The girl's face was instinct with a haughty superiority.

"Certainly not!" she answered, coolly.

She was so slender and small as she stood there that Darrel Moer believed that he could crush her out of life with one hand, and a murderous instinct came upon him to make the attempt.

But when, choking with anger, his bloodshot eyes lingered in a wolfish gaze upon her haughtily poised head—upon her wondrously lovely face, her glowing eyes, her red mouth, her small, spirited chin—a swift revulsion of feeling came over him.

All his old infatuation for her rushed upon him again in a swift tide.

He did not want even then to acknowledge to the world his marriage with her, so deep and thorough was his villany; but a new and fiendish thought possessed him with sudden force.

This girl was his bride.

Why should he not induce her to maintain their marital relationship secretly, while he could make the heiress of Floyd Manor his wife in the eyes of all the world?

He could destroy all proofs of the first marriage, that the second might not be invalidated, and yet preserve to Honor the self-respect that was dearer to her than life.

His changed sentiments showed themselves in his countenance, but Honor was not moved by the softening of his features or his changed manner. She knew him at last as he was—fickle as the wind, changeable as the tide, unstable as water—a human quicksand whom to trust was to bespeak destruction.

"You cannot rub out the fact that you are my wife, Honor," he exclaimed, in an eager, pleading voice. "You are bound to me by a tie you cannot break. Forgive me in earnest, as well as in mere

words, and come back to me. Be my own loving wife, Honor!"

He held out his hands, but suffered them to drop by this side as Honor's lip curled in disdain, and as Honor answered:

"Darrel Moer, you cannot bridge the gulf between us. I will never call myself by your name, or declare to the world that I am your wife. I have no wifely love for you, and I will not fetter any. I know you as you are, and I despise you."

"I can force you to come with me," cried Moer, fiercely, nearly beside himself.

"I think not," answered Honor, calmly. "At any rate I will put you to the trouble of going to law to get possession of me. I am unfortunately your wife, but I assure you that I will die before I will ever be more to you than I am at this moment. Knowing you as I know you, I do not believe that you will incur the publicity of a court of law in order to compel a woman to live with you who despises you. I am willing to make a compact with you, however. It is this: Leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone."

"Why should I leave you alone?" asked Moer, jealously. "So that you will feel free to make another marriage? You can't do that, you know, while I live. Mrs. Gint told me to-day, when I went to the Red House and asked to see you, that Sir Hugh Tregaron was the next day, after your return from the chapel, and had a long private interview with you. And Mrs. Gint said that the result of that interview was your speedy departure from the Red House, and from all the restraints of her household. She said also that last evening, an hour or so after you left the Red House, Sir Hugh Tregaron came again and asked to see you. She told him that you had gone, and under such circumstances as precluded all possibility of your return to her home. What did Tregaron say? Why, when she begged him to spend the evening, he said, in a lofty and imperious kind of way, that the house his future wife would not be permitted to enter could never shelter him. And with that he departed."

"He said that?" said Honor, her face kindling.

"He did. He evidently looks upon you as the future Lady Tregaron, and the jealous glare in Moer's eyes deepened. "You seem the most innocent of girls, Honor Gint, but it may be all artificial. You may be deep and scheming enough to think to throw me over because I no longer stand a chance in the Waldemar succession, and because I have become suddenly poor. Tregaron belongs to a proud old family, as ancient, but in point of rank far below the Waldemars, of course, yet a prize beside the ruined Darrel Moer. You cannot become Lady Tregaron while I live, Honor. Bear that in mind. Is Tregaron at Southport?" he added, suspiciously.

Honor's face flushed with indignation. She would not reply to the question so insinuatingly asked.

"I want to make a last appeal to you," said Moer, after an uneasy silence during which he resolved again to change his course. "Honor, I am weak and feebly and all that, but I love you. You can do what you will with me. I take back my insinuation that Tregaron knows your present lodging. I take back all that I have said that can in the least wound your delicacy. I love you, and I ask you—for your sake as well as mine—to go with me to some country place, there to live with me as my wife."

"You must be fond of refusals thus to risk another, Mr. Moer," responded the young girl. "I will have nothing to do with you. I shall stay in this house, and it is time for you to leave it. The landlady was an under-teacher at the school I attended, and is my friend. She wrote to me a few weeks since, on taking this cottage, asking me to recommend her to any Bolton people who might be coming to Southport to stay a few days or weeks, and I came directly to her house on arriving in the town. I have only to tell her my story to win her protection."

"To insure your being set out into the street," interrupted Darrel Moer, sneeringly. "I have not learned to read faces to be deceived by that of your landlady. At the nearest suspicion that a scandal might be aroused in connection with you she would hurry you out of her house, lest the reputation of her lodgings should suffer. If I'm not much mistaken she's on the other side of your door, trying to catch here and there a scrap of conversation. She's one of your prim and severe women who are hardest of all people upon those of their own sex. She heard me lock the door when I entered—I'll unlock it now—and went into agonies over it."

He unlocked the door as he spoke, and flung himself coolly into Honor's chair before the hearth.

"You will be kind enough to rise and go away immediately," said the girl, with haughty sternness.

"You are afraid my presence here will compromise you with your prim landlady, eh?" sneered Darrel Moer. "Very good; I have found a lover to work upon. I shall stay here, Honor Gint, until you con-

went to go away with me as my wife—if I have to stay all night."

"You cannot force me to remain," said Honor, her passionate young voice all in a quiver. "Come, Lucky, we will go into Miss Brown's rooms—"

"I'll follow you, and tell Miss Brown that you're my wife," exclaimed Moer. "Come, come; make the best of it, Honor. If you persist in holding out against me I shall think that Tregaron knows where you are, and that you are expecting to marry him as soon as you can get clear of me. By George! your anxiety to get me out of this house almost makes me think that you may be expecting him here this evening. If this were so I should be tempted to kill you," and he looked at her with another kindling of the jealous fire within him.

At that moment a double knock was heard on the outer door.

The landlady was heard to answer the summons, and a moment later she flung open Honor's door, and ushered into Honor's room—Sir Hugh Tregaron!

CHAPTER XXV.

The young Cornish baronet had wandered up and down the street, full of anxiety and restlessness, waiting for Darrel Moer to reappear; but as Moer lingered within the walls of Oak Cottage, and the light gloom deepened and the night fell, Sir Hugh's fears in regard to Honor Gilt increased, and he said to himself:

"Moer is just the man to take advantage of Honor's helplessness to insult her. She may need some friend to shield her from his intrusiveness. I am the one to protect her, for she has owned she loves me, and she is to be my wife. I will not stay out here longer when that man, whose every glance at an honest woman should be deemed an insult, is in there with her. Perhaps—poor, homeless child!—she is even now longing for my presence."

The thought spurred him to action. He hastened to seek admission into the cottage.

The landlady, with a waspish expression of countenance, showed him into Honor's room; and abruptly retreated into the hall.

Darrel Moer stared at the new arrival in amazement, and drew his breath hard, while a cruel, angry gleam burned like a red spark in his eyes. He believed, of course, that Honor had deceived him, and he watched her from that moment as a cat watches a mouse.

Honor's maid uttered a joyful exclamation. But Honor herself did not speak, or give utterance to a sound. She sprang forward involuntarily, however, and her face with its rare splendour kindled into a radiance such as Darrel Moer had never seen upon it. Her whole soul glowing with sudden joy glorified her features, and Darrel Moer knew then how she could love—and how she did love the young baronet.

He gnashed his teeth in his anger. Honor extended both her hands to Sir Hugh; and he took them in his.

For a moment the young lovers, severed by the barrier which one rash act had reared between them, stood forgetful of Darrel Moer and the girl Lucky; and were conscious only of each other's presence.

"Why did you run away from me, Honor?" breathed Sir Hugh, in a whisper too low for even Moer's jealous ears, while his grand face beamed with his joy at finding again his love. "When Mrs. Gilt turned against you you should have sent a messenger to me. I should not have permitted my little girl to knock about the world in this fashion."

What tender refuge his words and tones promised her, and she could never accept it!

Her mad and fatal marriage must separate them for ever. With a low sob that was half smothered in her slender throat, Honor released her hand and motioned her guest to a seat.

Sir Hugh greeted Moer politely, but with a gravity that declared to Honor how little he was pleased to see him there in her rooms.

Then he sat down with the evident determination of outwitting Darrel Moer.

"Have you been in Southport long, Sir Hugh?" inquired Moer, with a smiling smile.

"I came last evening, sir," was the cool response.

A red light leaped into Moer's eyes.

"You came down with Miss Gilt, then?" he asked rather than asked.

"Not so," replied Sir Hugh, with a quiet sternness that awed his interlocutor. "I called at the Red House last evening and discovered that Mrs. Gilt had dared to send from the shelter of her husband's roof her husband's adopted daughter. It was easy to find that Miss Gilt had come to Southport, her natural refuge, since she spent years at school here."

This morning I went to the school which Miss Gilt formerly attended, and failing to obtain news of her I searched all the hotels to-day and looked elsewhere for her. I was still searching this afternoon when I

beheld you, Mr. Moer, following Miss Gilt's maid, whom I see is present, and I followed you in turn to this house. I have been waiting outside for you to take your departure."

"That is rather cool, I must say," ejaculated Darrel Moer. "By what right, may I ask, Sir Hugh Tregaron, do you follow me here and wait outside for me to take my leave? By what right do you dare intrude yourself into Miss Gilt's apartments?"

"By the right of the honest love I bear her," answered Sir Hugh Tregaron, sternly, a commanding haughtiness glooming his gray eyes. "I have asked Miss Gilt to become my honoured wife, and as her future husband I am here, sir, to protect her from you, and such as you."

"Ah-h! Miss Gilt has promised to marry you?"

"It can make no difference to you, Mr. Moer, whether I am an accepted suitor or otherwise," said Sir Hugh, with increasing sternness. "Since Captain Gilt is not here to protect his daughter, I shall do so in his stead. Miss Gilt does not know the reputation you bear in society. She has been so carefully sheltered and cherished that she is not aware that no honest woman can receive your visits without risk of exciting scandal. An innocent girl should avoid Darrel Moer as she would avoid a deadly snake!"

"You are complimentary," sneered Moer.

"Oh, Hugh! Sir Hugh!" breathed Honor softly, in a gathering terror and dread.

"My darling!" returned Sir Hugh, in an undertone, "do you think I shall not protect you? This man is not fit to sit in your presence. I cannot permit you, in your girlish fear of him, to endure what is plainly a persecution!"

Honor trembled, and her fingers laced themselves together, fluttering nervously like frightened birds.

She looked from one to the other of her lovers in a wild appeal.

"I suppose," said Darrel Moer, indolently, "that it can make no difference to you, Sir Hugh Tregaron, what guests Miss Gilt chooses to entertain, provided she does choose to entertain them? Ask Miss Gilt if I am not welcome. She will hardly tell you no. Ask her if she desires me to leave this place. Ask her if she believes my libellous remarks against me."

Sir Hugh directed a keen, swift glance at Honor. He saw that she was pale with alarm, and that there was an unmistakable expression of aversion, even of loathing, on her face, which was turned towards Moer.

"My poor little girl!" he thought. "She is afraid of him. He has been persecuting her with his attentions, as I thought."

His face grew sternly and he said, coolly:

"There is no need to ask Miss Gilt the nature of her sentiments towards you, Mr. Moer. Her face expresses them without need of words. I see that your presence is distasteful to her."

"People have to endure many things in this world that are distasteful to them," drawled Darrel Moer, lazily.

Sir Hugh rose up, his tall figure instinct with stern command, his eyes full of fire, and exclaimed, haughtily:

"Mr. Darrel Moer, as Miss Gilt's friend and future husband, I command you to leave this house at once. The sooner you go the better it will be for you. If you object to going I shall not have the slightest objection to put you out. And permit me to warn you never to intrude upon Miss Gilt again, except at your own personal risk!"

Darrel Moer's face flamed. He grated his teeth, and looked as if he meant to show fight; but a timely sense of caution restrained him. It was not that he was a coward, but he reflected that if he persisted in remaining in Honor's rooms Honor would be compelled in self-defence to exhibit to Sir Hugh her certificate of marriage. And as he meant to destroy every scrap of written proof of that ill-starred marriage, and to deny to every one that such a ceremony had taken place, it behooved him to get now, in Sir Hugh's presence, as if he had no deep personal interest in Honor.

He therefore arose, with a deep, mocking bow, and said, in a discordant voice, the full significance of his words being comprehended only by his young bride:

"Of course I cannot resist the authority of a betrothed husband. I retire as gracefully as my great haste will permit. You will allow me to assure the future Lady Tregaron, Sir Hugh, that I will not again intrude upon her. In fact, since I know your claims upon her, I beg to withdraw mine. I leave Southport to-night. If I do not request too much, I beg you to send me cards to your wedding."

With another bow, and another sneering smile that quivered in every muscle of his dark Italian face, Darrel Moer retired from the room.

On finding himself alone in the hall he shook his

list at the closed door, and muttered, with a look of deadly menace:

"So that's the game, is it? I'll see if I can't spoil it. I'll have Bing steal that marriage certificate, and then, my fair Honor, you will be at my mercy. You are my wife, and not Sir Hugh Tregaron's, and shall remain so, if for no other reason than to avenge myself on them both!"

Neither Sir Hugh nor Honor spoke until Moer had quitted the house.

Honor's maid made a movement to withdraw, but the young mistress commanded her by a gesture to remain. She retired to a farther corner with a book, and became apparently absorbed in its contents.

"Honor," said the young baronet, in a low voice, "you must not be subjected to persecutions like these. Darrel Moer is a man to pursue any object which eludes him with impatience amounting to ferocity; but were the prize once within his hands it would seem valueless to him. We will not speak further of him, for he is the best subject for your thoughts, only I will say that he must not intrude upon you again. How did you happen to come to this house, Honor?"

"This landlady, Miss Brown, was an under-teacher in our school," said Honor. "She had laid up a little money, and being tired of teaching, has rented this house, and expects to support herself by taking lodgers. She's a very respectable person, Sir Hugh, and she will be fully competent to protect me."

"I cannot leave you here," declared Sir Hugh, decisively. "This is no place for you, my own darling. The captain is absent, and he has no relatives in England to whom you can go. My people will receive you with open arms, Honor. I have an aunt who will love you as her own daughter and protect you until our marriage can take place. This must be so, darling. We will not even wait for Captain Gilt's return."

Honor trembled. The cup of happiness was held very close to her parched lips, and yet she must not drink of it.

"Oh, Sir Hugh," she whispered, "it cannot be. I cannot marry you. Do not ask me why!"

"But you love me, Honor. You confessed as much to me at the Red House yesterday. If you love me what can come between us?"

Honor hesitated. The story of her mad marriage trembled on her lips, but she could not tell it. The grave and tender eyes fixed upon her, the grandly noble face of her lover, stirred her soul to its depths. She felt that she ought not to listen to words of love from Sir Hugh, or allow him to waste his life and his love upon one who could never be his wife. She moved away from him in an uncontrollable agitation.

"Sir Hugh," she whispered, her golden head drooping, "oh, I am very miserable—and the more miserable that I must make you unhappy. Indeed I cannot be your wife. Only yesterday morning I was free—free as the wind that is blowing now—and now I am bound—bound—"

Her voice broke down in a piteous sob.

"Bound by a promise to another?" said Sir Hugh.

The girl nodded dumbly.

"To Darrel Moer, Honor?"

The girl's head drooped yet lower. Her attitude was sufficient answer.

"My poor Honor!" said Sir Hugh, with an infinite tenderness. "Then this self-torture and this sorrow to me spring from the workings of your sensitive conscience. A bad promise is easily broken, my own darling—"

"Oh, don't, don't!" murmured the girl, pitifully. "This is more than I can bear! Oh, Sir Hugh, I have been mad! You don't understand me yet. I hate Darrel Moer. I fear him. His gaze almost paralyzes me. I believe him capable of any wickedness—and yet—and yet—Oh, Heaven!"

"You are afraid to break with the scoundrel," said Honor? asked Sir Hugh, his tone so soft and soothing and full of loving gentleness. "You are losing your high courage under all this pressure, my darling. I must hasten to take you into my own keeping, regardless of this promise to Mr. Darrel Moer."

He moved as if to take her in his arms.

She eluded his grasp, and fled from him swiftly,

hurrying to her little open desk.

She extracted from an inner compartment a folded paper, and came back to him, panting and wild-eyed,

crying out:

"You will never call me your darling again, Sir Hugh. You see that you and I must henceforth be strangers. You will marry some one of your own rank in life, while I—Heaven pity me! Read that—read it, Sir Hugh."

She placed in his hands the certificate of her marriage to Darrel Moer.

(To be continued.)



[THE REVELATION.]

THE LAST OF THE DE GERZFORDS.

"To think that the hope of the De Gerzfords should depend upon one slender life."

That was what poor mamma had been in the habit of saying ever since I could remember. Papa had been happy in a half-dozen brothers, who bid fair to uphold the family name royally, but death, which is no respecter of persons, had laid its cold hand upon one after another of those brave boys, and at last poor papa from his sick-bed looked at Harry with longing, loving eyes, and, dying, charged my mother to take care of the child, for he was the last of the De Gerzfords.

Harry had a splendid physique and an indomitable, masculine spirit, otherwise he could never have brought away from his petted, coddled childhood the manly courage and strength which made him the pride of the university.

It was a happy coming-home for mamma. Her darling had grown to man's estate, and he was all that her fond maternal soul could have desired.

"I have only one anxiety in the world, my dear Mrs. Maurice, and that is lest Harry should make a *médisance*. That haunts me day and night," she said to her friend, a constant visitor at our house.

Mrs. Maurice gently inclined her patrician head and said softly in reply:

"Young men are so dreadfully democratic now-a-days. There was Fred Bertram, he married his mother's seamstress—"

Mamma interrupted her with a little well-bred cry.

"Don't mention it, my dear; Harry could never do anything so ill bred as that."

Mrs. Maurice smiled.

She had a pretty, childish face, and nobody would have guessed her to be twenty-eight. Moreover, she had married a Maurice, and had she not been herself a Montmorenci once? It was clear that Harry might

do worse. So mamma petted and praised her, had her to dinner and tea, and talked about her in artful, sly terms to Harry. Dear, simple soul.

Harry smiled quietly, and by-and-bye stayed away altogether when the dainty, high-bred widow was their guest.

Sauntering in one evening, he found mamma in a sombre mood.

"You have annoyed me very much, my darling boy," she said, trying to knit her delicately pencilled brows into a frown and failing lamentably.

Harry came over beside the little figure in the great cushioned chair, stroked the fine, soft tendrils of silky hair that strayed over her fair temples, and said, lightly:

"I thought there was a crumpled rose-leaf somewhere. Where is it, dear?"

Mamma's displeasure had disappeared like the morning mists. The soft-hearted woman did not know how to be angry.

"You did not come to dinner, and Daisy Maurice was here. But you forgot, I daresay. I wish," she added, with a wistful look, "that you would like Daisy. She would make you such a charming wife!"

Harry turned away with a laugh.

"I don't fancy warmed-up affections, mamma."

Mamma made a little gesture of horror.

"Oh, Harry, Harry! where did you pick up such coarse expressions? It must be among those parvenu people where you will go."

Harry laughed again, and crossing the room looked idly out on the flowers that covered the window.

"By the way, speaking of parvenues," he said, suddenly, "somebody is moving into the pretty house over the way."

Mamma roused up with a look of interest, and Harry went on.

"I saw a van disgorging its contents before the door this morning, and when I came home just now a cab drove up, and an elderly lady, who looked

like a sad invalid, was lifted out. Then there followed a young lady."

Harry stopped short at the last word with a curious look in his face. Mamma did not notice it however.

"How did they look?" she asked, eagerly.

"As if they might be the owners of the sort of things I saw in the van."

"What sort of things were they, Harry? You are so tantalizing!"

Mamma left her easy-chair, and, coming over to the bay-window, looked curiously at the house opposite.

"Well," said Harry, "old furniture, a massive old buffet that looked as if it might have held the silver of some colonial grandee, and a very curious, antique harp. The servant was lamenting because the faded green cover had been torn from it in the transfer."

Mamma's lip curled slightly.

"Artist people perhaps. I do think it's too bad, after the pains we have all taken to prevent Rhododendron Terrace from being given over to people of that sort."

While mamma was speaking a carriage drove past, stopped at the house in question, the coachman deferentially opened the door, and a lady alighted—a slender, beautiful figure, unmistakably a lady, as one could not fail to see even in so casual a glimpse.

We all leaned forward with a curiosity which I am afraid was far from being well bred, and as we looked the lady suddenly turned her head, and we saw a fair, lovely profile as white and pure, said Harry afterwards, as one of the waxen camellias in the bay-window.

As our eyes met she averted hers instantly, and Harry drew back colouring with shame.

"What a set of inquisitive idlers she must think us!"

"My dear boy—what nonsense! As if it mattered what she thought."

Mamma's usually mellifluous tones were just a little sharpened.

Harry said no more, but I noticed that he kept a watch over the door where the lovely vision disappeared, and that his face lengthened considerably when, as the day wore on, no uplifted curtains or other indication betrayed the arrival of the new tenants.

Neither then nor afterwards did the old house ever hint at the life which went on within. Sullen and silent it gloomed by itself apart, and the sweet spring days came and went, and the early summer beauty flushed all over Rhododendron Terrace, and still the brick walls frowned, and the shutters were fast closed, and the doors only opened occasionally to give egress to the failing invalid, who was carefully led and sometimes half lifted, to a low and rather shabby pony phaeton; her daughter—we had found that it was her daughter—and a stolid man-servant took their places by her side, and the carriage rolled slowly away.

All this reticence did not fail to awaken curiosity in Rhododendron Terrace. The servants gossiped in the kitchen, and the subject was gracefully tossed about in the parlour.

Summer came on apace. Our little *parterres* were gay with flowers. The poor invalid, taking her daily airing, lay back white and faintly smiling as their perfume floated past.

We had watched the sad sight one morning, and mamma, furtively wiping away a tear, sighed out:

"Poor thing! she won't take many drives more!"

Harry unasily cut the pages of a new magazine, his face growing very set and stern all the while.

"Mother," he broke out, suddenly, "don't you think it's somebody's Christian duty to go and see those poor people and offer them friendly kindness and sympathy?"

The pretty pink fluttered in and out of mamma's cheeks. Her lips quivered as she faltered:

"We don't know anything about them, dear, but—"

"We know that one is soon to pass away by the same dark road which we must all travel some day, and that sorrow and desolation wait for the other."

Mamma broke out crying audibly.

"My dear Mrs. Mildmay," said Daisy Maurice, in her cold, sweet tones, "I am sure you distress yourself unnecessarily. Doubtless they have friends of their own—such people always have."

Harry gave her a shocked, indignant look. He might have said something harsh only just then there was a clatter of wheels and the next instant a cry, so sharp, so full of pain and terror, that it went to all our hearts.

We sprang to the window. The pony carriage had stopped at our neighbour's door. The widow was

supported in the arms of the servant, and the young girl was standing up in the carriage terror-stricken. "The poor woman is dying!" cried Harry, and the next instant she had left the room.

Mamma started up, pale and trembling.

"Get me a shawl, Mabel, quick," she cried.

"But, mamma—"

"Don't stop me. I must go. I ought to have gone before."

A rose-red flushed her cheeks. Her eyes were wet with tears. She caught a little breakfast shawl from my hands and ran out.

Daisy Maurice came to the window. A look of cold surprise hardened her infantine features and made her usually lovely face almost ugly.

"I didn't know that Mrs. Mildmay was so very impulsive," she said, then we were both silent, for a low, heart-broken sob from over the way arrested our attention, and the next moment we saw the lifeless body of the poor invalid lifted from the carriage and borne tenderly into the house. Mamma followed, supporting the weeping girl, and Harry held the door aside as if it had been a royal *cortège*.

Hours passed.

Mrs. Maurice had luncheon with me, waited with visible impatience for Harry's return, and finally was driven home.

The afternoon was waning when Harry came hurriedly in.

"Mamma is coming presently with Miss Hobart!" he said, in haste.

I stared at him blankly.

"She could not leave her there alone—bless her kind heart. Get the pink room ready, Mabel, and be good to her, won't you?"

Harry's eyes looked dim, and he suddenly bent over and kissed me.

"Of course I'll be good to her," I said, with dignity, but I went away with a little twinge of jealousy. What charm had this Miss Hobart that she had so impressed my fastidious brother?

Miss Hobart came. Her grief was so profound but so gentle in its manifestations that we were all of us deeply moved. Only once she lost her self-control. Mamma asked her if there was anybody whom she would like to be sent for, and she answered, with a great burst of crying, that she hadn't a friend in the world, whereat mamma took her in her arms and cried too.

We all went to the funeral.

Mrs. Maurice opened her eyes wide when I told her, and said that such things were so beautiful—so divine! She couldn't admire them enough in other people, but she was really so afraid of stepping over the line that divided her class from the rest that—well—really—she hadn't the courage.

Mamma straightened up in that spirited fashion of hers that makes her look like a queen if she is only five feet one.

"Miss Hobart is a lady," she said, in a calm, grand way; "and her mother was a lady. I am not afraid of associating with them. Class distinctions are only made by men."

Daisy Maurice stared at her in incredulous astonishment; and as for me I was utterly dumb. No such utterance was ever known to pass mother's lips before.

But I saw Harry's eyes twinkle; and when Mrs. Maurice had gone he walked over and kissed mamma, then went quickly out.

The funeral had been over a week when Miss Hobart joined us in the evening. She looked so sweet—so fair in her pallor and grief—there was such an indescribable loveliness in her whole air and aspect—that I couldn't blame Harry for having no eyes for anybody but her after she entered the room. I sat silent and wondered whether mamma guessed how utterly charmed he was by the beautiful stranger.

Miss Hobart had sat down on the sofa. Mamma begged her to come nearer the fire, for the evening was damp and cold. In changing her seat she came face to face with a portrait on the wall. At first she grew deathly white, then a burning red flushed back to her cheeks.

"Who is that?" she asked, in a curious, low tone. "That is my poor husband's sister," replied mamma. "A lovely face, isn't it? Put your feet on this hassock, my dear. Emily was a beautiful girl, but she broke the hearts of her friends by a *mésalliance*. She ran away with and married a poor music teacher. Her friends would never receive her again, and her portrait was put away in an upper room; but after Mr. De Gerzford died I had it brought down. Poor thing! If she made a mistake she was cruelly punished for it."

Mamma had talked on for the sake of amusing her melancholy guest, and as she talked she had been dutifully brushing up the hearth with a little Turkish broom.

Turning now, she beheld Miss Hobart standing upright, white and agitated.

"Are you not Mrs. Mildmay?" she stammered.

"Surely. I am Mrs. Mildmay. My first husband's name was De Gerzford," said mamma, evidently thinking Miss Hobart out of her senses.

"Was she—What was the name of that poor music teacher whom—"

She was pointing to the portrait, a strange light in her white face, a new fire in her eyes.

Mamma looked bewildered. Suddenly a thought flashed across her mind.

"Good Heaven! Why did I not think? I knew your name was familiar. Do you know—"

She paused, quite overwhelmed by the magnitude of the revelation.

"Your husband's sister was my mother," said Miss Hobart, tears raining down her pale cheeks. "And you were so good to me. But you will not want me here any longer."

She turned and went blindly towards the door. In an instant Harry was beside her, his arm detaining her.

"My darling! never shall you leave my heart and home if I can keep you. Oh, if you will stay with me!"

Her beautiful eyes faltered up to his eager, wistful ones.

His cause was won.

"My precious boy! I am so happy!" sobbed mamma. "To think that the two last of the De Gerzforths should be united! And oh, how happy I am that poor Emily went to Heaven from my arms. Ah! there must be joy there to-night."

There was joy below as we all nestled together, a glad, united family.

A. M. H.

NOT FOR GOLD.

"JANET's fortune! How much is it, mother?" said Ronald Mitchell as he carefully measured the anchovy for his boiled salmon.

"How much, Ronald? Nothing less than the whole Cross-me-loof estate, besides ten thousand pounds good money in the Bank of Scotland."

"Too little," replied Ronald, shaking his head in a meditative manner. "I could not sell myself so cheap."

"But there is the lassie forbye; she is not bad looking, and she is a careful housewife and a good Christian."

"Doubtless, mother, she is better than she's bonnie; but I know a girl worth ever so much more than Janet McDonald."

"That will be Bailie Johnson's daughter?"

"You do me too much honour; I do not aspire to a woman six feet high, especially when her temper is of equal proportions."

"Well, Isabelle has a bad temper, but Janet is different; she has no vice, and—"

"No heart."

"She has plenty of money."

"And no intellect."

"But she has interest enough to send you to parliament."

"I don't want to go there, mother, and I do want my dinner, and you are taking away my appetite."

Ronald drew the moor-cock towards him and helped himself so liberally that Mrs. Mitchell may be excused for altogether doubting the fact. Then there was a few minutes' silence, which did not deceive Ronald; he knew it was the lull before the breaking of the storm.

His mother's attitude of indifference and listlessness was all assumed; he was perfectly familiar with it, and knew—for none had better reason to know—what a proud, resolute spirit it hid.

She was only hesitating now to open the subject which lay nearest her heart, because Ronald maintained a neutrality of perfect silence, and she knew that if she began the dispute she gave him at the opening of the argument all the advantages which belong to the defendant.

While she was hesitating a servant brought in a card and gave it to her.

"It is Willie, Ronald," she said; "you had better go and see him."

"Why so, mother? I know nothing about the property. You and he have always managed it. Besides, I have an engagement at half-past seven."

"But something must be done. Every year the rents are decreasing. My income will soon be at starvation point."

Ronald looked up, and smiled incredulously.

"Oh, yes. I keep up an appearance of course, and I suppose I shall always be able to do that, for I am not one of the foolish women who spend all they have. I have laid a little by to help the future; but what is to become of you?"

"Heigh-ho! I have a good angel, I suppose."

"A good wife would be more to the purpose, and

if you would only marry Janet McDonald she would bring you a fine estate; besides, she is a prudent lassie, and would help you to keep the gear well together."

"How do I know that Janet would have me?"

"I have already spoken to her."

"It was throwing words away, mother. If there is anything else I can please you in I shall be willing and obedient, but I dare not cast my life away—not for gold at least."

"Yet you are going to do it for a pretty face."

"You are mistaken. I have my price, I suppose; but neither land nor beauty is able to buy me."

"The conceit of men is wonderful; it passes the comprehension of women. Where are you going this evening?"

"To Mrs. Sorley's."

"To see Miss Eve. Very well, Ronald. Remember, if you decline to accept Janet McDonald as your wife I also decline to receive Eve Sorley as my daughter. I suppose the right of rejection is left to me as well as you."

"Not equally, mother. You cannot make Janet my wife; but I, by marrying Eve, can make her your daughter."

"I deny it, sir; for in such a case you would no longer be my son. Good-evening, sir."

"Mrs. Mitchell Victrix as usual," said Ronald, laughing softly to himself, and slowly refilling his glass. "Here is a new turn in affairs. I must go and see what Eve says about it."

On his way there he tried not to think of the subject—it perplexed and annoyed him; but Eve had a way of letting sunlight into everything, and whatever she advised of course he would do.

Eve, watching and listening in the shadow of the crimson draperies, heard the echoes of his long, swinging steps, and divined in them something new, even before she saw the strange light in his usually merry eyes.

"What is the matter, Ronald? I do not believe I shall call you 'Sans Souci' to-night; you look troubled."

"You may call me the 'Disinherited Knight,' for I think my trouble will amount to that."

"What have you been doing?" said Mrs. Sorley.

"My sin is one of omission, madam. You see, Mrs. Sorley, I am only a part of the estate to my mother. She wants to invest me profitably, just as she does her other property. At present she gives me five hundred pounds a year; but if I refuse to carry out her plans she will withdraw the allowance I am sure. Then what am I to do?"

"Ask Eve."

Eve met the questioning face with one of confidence.

"Go to work, sir, and make five hundred pounds a year. I will marry you when you can earn three hundred pounds. What do you say to that?"

"That you are the wisest and loveliest and bravest little lady in Christendom."

And he fairly lifted her in his arms and kissed her.

"Put me down, Ronald, and listen to what I say. You are six feet two inches high and strong as Hercules. You never have a headache, and are just twenty-two years old. 'Disinherited!' Pah! Your inheritance is in your own keeping. The world is given to the children of men; go into it, and take your portion."

Nothing strengthens a man in trouble like the sympathy and help of the woman he loves.

Ronald went from Eve's presence gifted with a definite purpose and an appointed task. The inward change had its outward evidences. It was perceptible in his firm, rapid tread, which had lost its usual lazy swing, in the manner which he ascended the steps two and three at a time, and in the impetuous way in which he flung hat and gloves on the hall table, and entered his mother's presence.

She was half sitting and half lying in a large easy-chair, lazily dipping her toast into a glass of mulled wine.

But at Ronald's entrance she partly turned her head and said, in a sleepy manner:

"Your energy is exhausting and unnecessary, Ronald; I wish you would be more gentlemanly."

He tried to obey her as he had always done, but he was too excited.

Before he got half across the room he stumbled over a small ottoman, and then kicked it out of his way.

"What is the matter with you, sir? What kind of company have you been in to bring such a riotous influence back with you?"

"I have been with two of the noblest women in the world, mother."

"Indeed! I am sure I should never have thought so."

And the sneering accent was very perceptible.

"I told you I was going to Mrs. Sorley's, and I have been."

"Very well, sir; that is enough. I am not curious about the family. We will change the subject, please."

The habit of obedience was so strong that he remained silent—if silence that might be called in which every attitude was eloquent with resistance.

"The two Wilkies were here to-night. They wish you to join them in a fishing excursion to the Trosachs. I told them I was sure you would go."

"You are mistaken, mother. I shall be better employed, I hope."

Mrs. Mitchell raised her eyes incredulously, but asked:

"How?"

"I am going to try and find some work to do."

"Work!" almost screamed his mother; "and pray what can you do?"

"Indeed, mother, very little; but I can learn. I have been taught nothing useful; my education is superficial, and no profession has been given me. I am not even fit for a clerkship. I see nothing before me but manual labour, unless you continue my allowance while I study law or medicine."

"You have begun at the wrong end of your story, sir. Now be pleased to begin your argument properly. What led you to form this resolution?"

"Your remark this evening. You declared that if I married Miss Sorley I should no longer be your son."

"Quite correct."

"Then, as I am determined to marry Miss Sorley, it becomes necessary for me to decide upon some way of supporting her and myself."

"True; for you can hardly expect me to support a young woman I detest. As for continuing your allowance, I shall do no such thing; I will give you a month to reconsider your conduct, and if at the end of it you still prefer this—"

"Miss Sorley, mother?"

"This girl, sir, you can take her, and go your own way. That is all I have to say, sir."

But it was easier to determine to work than to find the work to do, and, if it had not been for the strengthening influence of Eve, Ronald would perhaps have become discouraged.

The month drew to a close, and still no employment had been found.

"What shall I do, Bright Eyes?" said Ronald, one evening. "It seems as if there was no place in the work-a-day world for me."

"Oh, yes, there is, only you have not found it yet. Do you know, Ronald, mamma and I have been talking of your going to London?"

The suggestion was not new to the young man; his own heart had been giving him the same advice from the very first; and the subject once broached soon assumed a tangible form.

It was thoroughly discussed and arranged for, and Ronald's place taken in a steamer leaving two days before his month of grace expired.

During all his trials and preparations Ronald's home—ever a happy one—had been becoming daily more uncomfortable. His mother wearied him with alternate reproaches and entreaties, and his friends pitied or abused, advised or laughed at him. Still, the last night he was to spend under his mother's roof he made another effort at reconciliation.

"I have a miserable headache to-night," he said.

"Kiss me, mother, for the sake of old times."

"Certainly, Ronald, if the kiss implies that you have recovered your senses, and are willing to follow out my plans for your welfare."

"I cannot give up Eve, mother. Forgive me this!"

"You are old enough to choose between us. If it is Miss Sorley, her kisses must suffice you."

"At least, mother, shake hands."

"You are sentimental to-night—a thing I have no use in the world for. Obedience is the test of love."

"Well, good-night, mother."

"Good-night, sir."

And thus they parted, never more to meet in this world.

Hard as his parting was with Eve it did not sadden him like the unnatural "Good-night, sir," of his mother.

In the former there were love and hope and the promise of a happy reunion.

After Ronald's departure Eve waited hopefully and happily for the good news she was sure would come. Nor did she wait in vain.

In due time Ronald had completed his legal studies and had commenced practice.

For some time his business was small, but at the end of the fourth year he was making more than enough to claim the redemption of Eve's promise.

Mrs. Sorley accompanied her daughter to England, and lived many happy years with the young couple. Ronald is always a warm defender of that much-abused character, a mother-in-law.

As years wore on the little vine-covered cottage in the suburbs was added to and enlarged, until Mr. Mitchell's handsome house and gardens, his thoroughbred horses and numerous servants, certainly afforded evidence of an income vastly above the five hundred pounds a year he refused to accept as equivalent for manhood's noblest rights and privileges.

Ronald is a portly middle-aged man now, and Eve, though still beautiful, has lost the early bloom of youth; but up and down the long walks, and through the shady arcades of elm and chestnut, beautiful boys and girls play, walk, or read, uncontrolled by any element but a wise and patient love. For Ronald has still a sad remembrance of a home cheerless and loveless amid all its splendour, of a childhood unblest by fairy lore or mother's kisses, and of a youth in which everything was to have been sacrificed for interest and ambition.

Mrs. Mitchell still lives. If her heart ever softened towards her son she never suffers it to make any sign. She is apparently as indifferent to his later honours as she was to his early struggles and trials. It is likely even that she may outlive her busy, hard-working son, whose brain and heart carry the cares and sorrows of many besides his own, for

The good die first,

And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust

Burn to the socket.

Yet never has Ronald Mitchell regretted the day in which he chose love before land, and a true wife in preference to ten thousand pounds. Ask him to-day if he would part with even one memory of the real life which commenced for him with that decision, and he would answer proudly and confidently, "Not for gold."

A. E. B.

FACETIÆ.

"DOLLY VARDEN" bathing suits are the latest novelties.

BILLINGS AND COOINGS.—Mr. Josh Billings says this much of billings and cooings:—"Courtin' is like 2 little springs of soft water that steal out from under a rock at the foot of a mountain, and run down by the hill side by side, singing and dancing and spluttering each other, eddying and frothing and cascading, now hiding under bank, now full of sun and now full of shadow, till byemby the jine, and then they go slow."

TIT FOR TAT.—The following anecdote of what took place at a theatre we give on oral authority: A gentleman seated in the stalls who was afflicted with remarkably long ears overheard the jocular remarks of a neighbouring young man to another, which were by far too loudly expressed. The proprietor of the ears turned round thereat sharply and said, "Sir, it is true my ears are very large indeed for a man, but yours are very small indeed for a donkey."

COURTSHIP EXTRAORDINARY.—Liszt, the celebrated pianist, fell in love with a jeweller's daughter. A Prague journal thus describes the courtship:—"One morning the jeweller, coming to the point with German frankness, said to Liszt, 'How do you like my daughter?' 'She is an angel.' 'What do you think of marriage?' 'I think so well of it that I have the greatest possible inclination to it.' 'What would you say to a fortune of three million francs?' 'I would willingly accept it.' 'Well, we understand each other. My daughter pleases you; you please my daughter; her fortune is ready—be my son-in-law!' 'With all my heart. The marriage was celebrated the following week.'

HOW TO GO TO SLEEP.—A scientific journal tells us "how to go to sleep." It says: "Very few persons can count a hundred and find themselves awake; but should this happen repeat the dose until cured." Mr. Nubbins couldn't sleep well, so he tried this counting cure. He counted one hundred, and was still awake; then he counted the same hundred backwards, and was not asleep; then he began in the middle of one hundred and counted each way at the same time, and this didn't throw him into the arms of Morpheus. Then he repeated the dose, and counted about seventy-five thousand, he thinks, which didn't send him to the land of Nod even; so he just got indignant, and turned over and went to sleep without any more to do about it.

PUZZLING.—In a trial at Winchester we are assured a witness was recently called who interlarded his accounts of a conversation he had had with so many expressions of "says I" and "says he" that he was hardly intelligible. The counsel, failing to make the witness comprehend the form in which he was wanted to make the statement, the Court took him in hand, with the following result:—"My man, tell us exactly what passed." "Yes, my lord, certainly; I said I should not have the pig." "Well, what was his answer?" "He said that he had been keeping the pig for me, and that he—"

"No, no, he did not say that—he could not have said it. He

spoke in the first person." "No, I was the first person that spoke, my lord." "I mean this—don't bring in the third person—repeat his exact words." "There was no third person, my lord, only him and me." "Look here, my good fellow, he did not say he had been keeping the pig, he said 'I have been keeping it.'"

"I assure you, my lord, there was no mention of your lordship at all. We are on two different stories, my lord. There was no third person, and if anything had been said about your lordship I must have heard it."

THE FORCE OF OBSERVATION.

An old man of very ancient physiognomy, answering to the name of Jacob Wilmot, was brought to the police court. His clothes looked as though they might have been bought second-hand in his youthful prime, for they had suffered more from rags of the world than the proprietor himself.

"What business?"

"None; I am a traveller."

"A vagabond, perhaps?"

"You are not far wrong. Travellers and vagabonds are about the same thing. The difference is that the latter travel without money and the former without brains."

"Where have you travelled?"

"All over the country."

"For what purpose?"

"Observation."

"What have you observed?"

"A little to commend, much to censure, and a great deal to laugh at."

"Humph! what do you commend?"

"A handsome woman who will stay at home, an eloquent preacher who will preach short sermons, a good writer who will not write too much, and a foolish man who has sense enough to hold his tongue."

"What do you censure?"

"A man that marries a girl for her fine clothing, a youth who studies medicine while he has the use of his hands, and the people who will elect a drunkard to office."

"What do you laugh at?"

"I laugh at a man who expects his position to command the respect which his personal qualifications and qualities do not merit."

He was dismissed.

A VIOLIN STORY.—A southern paper relates a story of the snaggings of a steamboat, with the owner on board, who was very fond of playing on the violin. The captain, pilot, and engineer were playing cards one day, when her bow struck a snag, with a force that knocked a hole in her as big as a hoghead. The shock upset the fare bank and those who were gathered around it, and caused a general confusion and consternation among all except the owner, who, having righted his chair, recommenced his tune where he left off, and went on as though nothing had happened. "She's a-sinking!" shouted an Arkansas man, dressed in a hickory dark coat, who was making his way out of the cabin with a pair of saddle-bags on his arms. "Tomehawk me if she ain't sinking, sure!" The owner heard it, but fiddled away as unconcernedly as Nero at the burning of Rome. "Run the 'Bazzard' ashore, if you can," shouted the captain. The startling words reached the ear of the owner, but he continued to saw away. The passengers ran to him and bawled out:—"Do you know the boat is snagg'd?" "I suspected something of the kind," coolly answered the owner, as he laid his left ear to the violin, a la Ole Bull, and appeared perfectly enchanted with his own strains. "She'll be lost in five minutes," continued the passengers. "She's been a losing concern these five years," replied the owner, as he drew most exhorting tones from his fiddle. "I can feel her settle," said a passenger. "I wish she would settle with me for what I have lost by her, before she goes down," was the owner's reply as his right hand moved backwards over the fiddle. "But why don't you speak to the captain, and give him orders what to do in the emergency?" asked one of the passengers. "Interfering with the officers of a boat is a very delicate matter," meekly and quietly remarked the owner as he still sawed away. The boat careered over, and the next moment the cabin was full of water. The "Bazzard," together with her cargo and machinery, proved a total loss. The officers, crew, and passengers saved themselves by means of a yawl, and the owner swam ashore with his fiddle under his right arm and the bow in his mouth. This wasn't half a fiddler. Any respectable English fiddler would have sat down, and begun again on the bank at the last note at which he left off.

WINDING UP THE CLOCKS.

One of our economic Ministers (says a contemporary) recently arrived on his mission at a public department a few seconds after the nominal hour for the commencement of business, entered the first room in a long passage, and there beheld a well-dressed youth, who, with his back to the fire, was calmly perusing a morning paper.

"Alone?" inquired the Minister.

"Ya-as," replied the sole tenant of the office.

"Not much to do, I suppose? Plenty of time to read the papers, I see?"
"Ya-as, plenty. I can always do my work here in twenty minutes."

"Oh, you can, can you? Has Mr. — come?" naming the head of the department.

"I believe not," replied the newspaper student.

"Which is his room, may I ask?" pursued the Minister.

"Last on the right, along the passage," answered the youth.

Thither the Minister repaired, and when the head of the department arrived the latter was after the first greetings informed that it was clear there was ample room for a reduction of the clerical staff. The departmental head protested that he really had not men enough to get through the work.

"Oh," quoth the economist, "I know better than that. Why, not ten minutes ago one of them told me he had plenty of time to read the papers, and could get through his work here in twenty minutes."

The under-secretary protested that no clerk in the place could say so truly.

"Then come and see him," said the Minister.

As they went along the passage they met the youth in question.

"Did you not tell me, sir," demanded the right hon. gentleman, "that you had plenty of time to read the papers?"

"I did," was the reply.

"And that you could do all the work in twenty minutes?"

"Yes."

"There," said the Minister, triumphantly, "it is clear your staff must be reduced, Mr. —"

"But," stammered the head of the department, "I do not know this gentleman; he is not a clerk here!"

"Clerk here!" replied the youth, in an injured tone; "I should think not, indeed! I come once a week in the mornings to wind and regulate the clocks!"

And he stalked off in dudgeon, leaving the economical Cabinet Minister to enjoy the joke as he might.

THE VOLUNTEER VISIT TO BELGIUM.—The arrangements for the English Volunteers' visit to Belgium are going on with spirit. The Belgium railway companies are very willing to make liberal allowances for the transport of their military guests from Ghent to Brussels, and it seems that first-class return tickets can be had for a guinea. This is reasonable enough to make the affair very popular.

INTERESTING RELICS.—Some valuable antiquities have been dug up at Rome, in making the foundations for a new house. They consist of a mosaic pavement in excellent preservation, with fragments of a wall, decorated with frescoes, also in good condition. A short time before, a quantity of bronze utensils, horses' bits, coins, and marble inscriptions had been found upon the site of the new Ministry of Finance. All these interesting relics will be added to the collection at the capitol.

HELIOGRAPHIC PRINTING.—A new industrial art, under the name of "heliographic printing," the invention of M. Jozz, is now attracting attention in Paris. This process is said to enable an artist to make his own designs and drawings, to print from them upon photographic paper, and reproduce the same upon lithographic stone, so as to obtain impressions of his own work, in the minutest details, independent of the engraver or lithographic draughtsman.

EARTHQUAKE NEAR NEW YORK.—A veritable earthquake was felt on the 11th of July in the vicinity of New York city, in Westchester county, and on Long Island. The shock is reported at the beginning to have been similar to that of a piece of artillery or heavily laden cart driven rapidly over frozen ground. It seemed to come from the south and roll away towards the north. It was sufficiently loud to awaken nearly all the sleepers, to cast down piles of coals in cellars, to shake the crockery in the rooms, and to give a very perceptible vibration to the houses.

AN INTERESTING MEDAL.—The director of the Berlin Museum purchased, the other day, a gold medal, smaller than a sovereign, for the considerable sum of 1,600 francs. On one side is the head of Marcus Brutus, *imperator*, and on the other that of Junius Brutus, first consul, according to the inscriptions on the medal itself. This medal was no doubt struck, says the *Gazette de Cologne*, soon after the battle of Philippi, which overthrew the triumvirate and the ancient Roman Republic, and set up the new empire. If this coin is unique the price given for it is not remarkably high.

DISCOVERY OF AN OLD PULPIT.—A famous pulpit in marble, of the Giovanni Pisano, and specially referred to by Vasari, had disappeared from the cathedral of Pisa, and was supposed to have

been destroyed in the fire which happened there in the year 1596. A wood-carver, named Guiseppo Fontana, has, however, succeeded in disproving the supposed destruction. After a long search he has found nearly the whole of the parts of the pulpit; some amidst heaps of rubbish in the churchyard, others beneath the portico and in the vaults. All the statues, bas-reliefs, and capitals have been found; nothing, in short, is missing but the entablature and the base. The work is to be immediately put together, made good, and replaced.

THE GOLD-FINGERED BRAHMIN. A HINDOO TALE.

A FAMOUS merchant, who had made
A fine estate by honest trade
With foreign countries, by mischance
(The failure of a firm in France
And several cargoes lost at sea)
Became as poor as poor could be;
Of all his riches saving naught,
Except, indeed, the pleasing thought
Of generous deeds in better days,
Which some remembered to his praise.
Of these, a Brahmin, who had known
The merchant ere his wealth had flown,
And how he helped the sick and poor,
Entered, one day, his open door,
And said, "My friend! I know you well;
Your former state; and what befell—
That all was lost; and well I know
Your noble life, and fain would show
(Since I have power—Heaven be adored!)
How all your wealth may be restored.
Now please attend: Whene'er you see
A Brahmin who resembles me
In looks and dress (and such a one
Will enter here at set of sun)
Just strike him on the forehead—thrice;
And, lo! his fingers, in a trice,
Will turn to solid gold! Of these
Cut off as many as you please:
(The ten will make a goodly sum),
And thus the Brahmin form will come
Whenever you have need of gold.
Consider well what I have told!"

With this the Brahmin went away,
And, sure enough, at close of day,
A stranger, like the other, came—
So like, indeed, he seemed the same—
And sat him down; and, quick as thought,
The blows are struck, the charm is wrought,
And all his fingers turn to gold!
Oh, wondrous sight!—And now behold
The happy merchant rich once more
As in his thrifty days of yore!
A barber, curious to know
Whence all this sudden wealth might flow,
By watching, morning, noon, and night,
The magic Brahmin brought to light;
At least, he thought beyond a doubt,
He'd found the golden secret out;
And straight he called three Brahmins in,
And bade them sit: "For so I'll win,"
The fellow reasoned, "thrice as much
As if a single man I touch;
The more the men the more the gold!
I'll have as much as I can hold
In all my pockets, at a blow!"
But when he struck the Brahmins, lo!
They turned not into golden ores,
But turned—the barber out of doors!
And, angry at his scurvy trick,
Each beat him soundly with a stick!

MORAL.

To all who read this pleasant tale—
The barber's fate may serve to teach
How sadly imitators fail
Who aim at things beyond their reach!
J. G. S.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO PRESERVE LEMONS.—Lemons may be kept for any length of time by varnishing them over with a solution of shellac in spirit of wine.

IMMERSE THE FEET IN HOT WATER.—Remember never to have the foot-bath so hot as to occasion a disagreeable sensation; this would drive the blood to the head, instead of drawing it from it. If possible, when bathing the feet, have a warm bath for the hands also; the object being to bring the heat to the extremities.

TO PREVENT LEAD POISON.—Workers in lead should wash their hands frequently in a strong decoction of oak bark, wear short hair, and, during work, cloth caps. The hands should be cleansed and the mouth well rinsed with cold water before eating. The food should contain a large proportion of fat, and milk should be taken in large quantities.

CLEANING SILK.—Use potato-water for all colours and kinds; grate them into cold spring water, say a large potato to every quart of water, of which five or six will do for a couple of dresses. If for very light silk, pare the potatoes; if any water dark, merely wash them clean. The pan of water must not be stirred in the least for forty-eight hours; then very slowly and steadily pour off the clear liquor, but not a particle of the sediment, into an open vessel—a bath, or such like; dip the pieces of silk into this liquid up and down a few times, without the least creasing them, then wipe them on a flat table with a clean towel, first one side then the other. It is good to hang each one as dipped upon a line to allow the drops to drain off a little before wiping. Have a damp cloth to cover them in till all is done; then iron one way, on the soiled side. It astonishes one to see how nice a dress looks done in this manner.

STATISTICS.

COUNTY COURTS.—A quarter of a century has elapsed, since the establishment of the County Courts in England and in Wales. In that time there have been 17,300,036 plaints entered. A large proportion of the causes are settled at once, but there were 9,758,186 which were tried, or in which judgment was entered; there were only 21,949 in which a jury was required. The sums for which the plaints were entered amounted to 46,203,954.

SEAMEN'S REMITTANCES.—In the year 1871 £3,207 money orders were issued at foreign ports to seamen, payable at ports in the United Kingdom. The orders were for the payment of sums amounting together to 39,153*l*. At Havre 703 orders were issued for payment in this country of sums amounting to 9,252*l*.; at Hamburg, 566 orders for 7,976*l*.; at Rotterdam, 391 orders for 5,804*l*.; at Antwerp, 417 orders for 4,996*l*.; at Dunkirk, 280 orders for 2,535*l*.; at Bremerhaven, 153 orders for 2,201*l*.; at Amsterdam, 142 orders for 2,114*l*.; at Marseilles, 118 orders for 1,146*l*. The other ports show smaller amounts, going down to one order issued at Para for payment of 10*l*. in this kingdom, and one at Archangel for 23*l*. The British Consuls issue the orders.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A WINDOW to the memory of Sir John Herschel is about to be erected in Hawkhurst Church, Kent.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD ONES.—In reply to an inquiry, the master of the Mint has written a letter stating that worn-out silver coin can be exchanged for new at the Bank of England and its branches.

SIR RICHARD WALLACE has, it is said, offered to erect fifty drinking-fountains in the city of Paris, and has sent photographs of the model prepared for the purpose to the Municipal Council.

A CURIOUS directory is announced, consisting in alphabetical order, since 1848, of all persons who have been declared bankrupt, separated from their wives, or condemned by the courts.

AGE AND MARRIAGE.—From statistics a contemporary says it appears to him—1. That one-seventh part of the females who marry in England are married between the ages of fifteen and twenty. Yes, but what becomes of the other six-sevenths parts of her?

THERE has been a large vein of what is believed by some to be gold, but which is supposed to be a superior kind of copper, discovered within four miles of Kinsale, at a place called Bellinspittle. There has been a guard of police placed over the quarry in which it has been found.

THE drum of a column from the Temple of Ephesus—the most massive specimen of that famous edifice which has yet been received in this country—arrived at the British Museum on the 2nd instant. The immense case, which had to be drawn by ten horses, caused great excitement among all the museum visitors.

TOPOGRAPHY AND ANTIQUITIES OF PARIS.—A few years before the fall of the Empire, Baron Haussmann commenced the compilation of a complete history, geological, topographical, and antiquarian; of the city of Paris, and ten or eleven volumes, containing the topography of old Paris, the history of important manuscripts, and the geology of the Seine, were published before the breaking out of the war. It is now proposed to complete the work, which, it is estimated, will make forty or more volumes, and cost between three and four thousand pounds. The mass of materials is very large, as the work is to include, in addition to the topography and history of the city, the seals, arms, insignia, liveries, and other memorials from the earliest date to the present day. It is highly creditable to the authorities, who, surrounded with difficulties of all kinds, thus find time and money for the completion of historical and artistic records like the work in question.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
ELIQA; OR, THE	430
GIPSY'S CURSE...	409
SCIENCE...	412
THE IGNITING POINT	412
OF EXPLOSIVES...	412
SHOULD I REFIN	412
WHEN TIME FOR-	412
GIVES?...	412
SOMETHING WRONG	412
WITH THE SUN...	412
MARIGOLD...	413
WARNED BY THE PLA-	415
NETS...	415
ROBERT RUSHTON'S	418
DESTINY...	418
WINIFRED'S DIA-	421
MONDS...	421
LORD DAN'S ERROR	424
FIGHTING WITH FATE	425
THE LAST OF THE DE	435
GREYFORD...	435
NOT FOR GOLD...	439

his wife than a true, loving heart, the existence of which can be made manifest in those thousand little amenities which combine to make a home sacred and happy. These a loving woman can render almost without effort. But her nature, because it is the complement of a man's nature, looks for and expects from him a different sort of devotion and a less passive manifestation of love. Therefore if a man lacks manual or mental skill, or being deficient in ability, supposes that he may rely exclusively on his affectionate disposition, he is likely, even though he be wealthy, to find out his mistake some day. A woman is endowed with so much sensitiveness that in the companion of her life she expects that quality to be supplemented by a certain amount of working capability and force. She is able to link herself inseparably not even with her child nor with a nature as feminine as her own. Persistently as she may inculcate by example the virtues of patience and endurance she is disappointed if in the object of her choice the combative qualities are so dormant that not even a matter of principle or a sense of injustice will arouse them. To be happy she must be able to be conscious that in her husband she has discovered another kind of strength than that which she has—a strength which invites her to lean upon him in the times of her weakness, although in a wonderful way she is often one of the sources of the strength upon which she finds repose. "Nellie" and "Minnie" are quite right to ask for an affectionate heart, but if they reflect they will find that they would wish that this may not be the only trait in their husbands' characters.

THE BACHELOR CHRONICLE.

Friend Tom, the crows have tracked your brow.

And Time has bent your frame;

Your step, that was Apollo's, now

Is just a trifle lame;

The hand that had the vice's grip—

Your only vice, I know—

Now lets my digits weakly slip

Your honest fingers through.

But we were boys together, Tom.

And grew and fought and loved,

And through life's early weather, Tom,

True heart companions proved.

We played at tops and mumble-peg,

We ran away from school,

And often bared our little legs

For duck eggs in the pool.

You stuck to me like tenets, Tom;

For you this arm would light;

We'd hooping-cough and measles, Tom,

Together, as was right;

Were whipped by the same teacher, Tom;

Both loved the self-same maid;

Were lectured by one preacher, Tom,

And went to the same trade.

Together joined our purses, Tom;

Together shared life through;

We bet on the same horses, Tom;

Alike we voted too.

We should have married sisters, Tom,

But each the mitten won;

Perhaps I sowed us blisters, Tom,

This going life alone.

Thus hand-in-hand we wandered, Tom,

As twins in soul should do;

The same life problems pondered, Tom,

The same things doubted too.

We've tried to live like men, Tom,

And ever do the right;

Of course we've erred, but then, Tom,

'Twas want of inner light.

We know a little valley, Tom,

Down in the willow grove;

When Time shall utter "tally," Tom,

And we are called above.

There, side by side, we'll slumber, Tom,

In reverent hope for grace.

Among the chosen number, Tom,

That see the Master's face.

F. J. O.

BELLA, eighteen, tall, pretty, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

CLARE, twenty-three, blue eyes, golden hair, a blonde, and of domesticated habits; would like to marry a nice young man about her own age.

TOM W. (Derbyshire), twenty-five, dark and handsome. Respondent must be pretty, able to play the piano, and have a little money.

RUDOLPH, twenty-five, 5ft. 9in., very fair, and in a good position. Respondent must be pretty, and about twenty-one.

LISSETTE, twenty-three, tall, domesticated, and fond of children. Would like to marry a tall young man about her own age.

FANNY, eighteen, rather short, fair complexion, and is well educated; wishes to correspond with a young man in the Royal Navy.

HARRIET, twenty-one, medium height, loving and affectionate, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-five; a tradesman preferred.

HARRY, twenty-three, rather short, dark complexion, and is a printer. Respondent must not be over twenty and fond of children.

BELLA, nineteen, tall, pretty, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, handsome, and about twenty-three.

ERMINIE, eighteen, tall, pretty, and has an income. Respondent must be in a good position and not over twenty-two.

BILLY, twenty-five, 5ft. 8in., fair complexion, and a mechanic. Respondent must not be under twenty and loving.

JACK S., thirty, tall, stout, handsome, dark moustache, and a sailor. Respondent must be tall, pretty, and not over twenty-six.

METZ, twenty-one, tall, handsome, and fond of home

and children, wishes to correspond with a young man who is handsome, loving, and able to make a wife happy; a tradesman preferred.

ALFRED C., twenty-four, rather short, dark complexion. Respondent must be pretty, domesticated, and not under twenty.

AMY B. F., twenty-nine, rather short, rosy cheeks, loving and domesticated. Respondent must not be under thirty, dark, handsome, fond of home and children; an officer in the Navy preferred.

WALTER S., twenty-four, tall, dark, handsome, and of an independent position. Respondent must be about his own age, tall, pretty, and have no objection to go abroad.

JABEZ, thirty, tall, dark moustache, a widower with one child, and a tradesman. Respondent must be about twenty-eight, loving, make a good wife, and able to cook a dinner.

FIRE, twenty, blue eyes, light-brown hair, pretty, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, handsome, of a loving disposition, and have a good income.

AMELIA, thirty, medium height, rather stout, pretty, well educated, in a good position and loving. Respondent must be a sober, respectable man in an independent position.

A. C. D., twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., dark-brown eyes, fair complexion, loving, and a tradesman's son. Respondent must be about nineteen, tall, dark, good figure, and well educated.

BOBBY S., twenty-four, 6ft., dark hair and eyes, in a good position and has expectations. Respondent must be tall, pretty, domesticated, able to look after his home, and not under twenty.

JIMMY, twenty-four, short, rather stout, dark moustache, and able to keep a wife. Respondent must be a servant about nineteen, thoroughly domesticated and fond of children.

JANE, nineteen, medium height, blue eyes, auburn hair, and of domesticated habits. Would like to correspond with a tall, handsome young man, who has a little business of his own.

PAISAY, nineteen, average height, considered handsome, domesticated, fond of home and children. Respondent must be tall, fair, in a good position, and be about twenty-two.

E. S. F., nineteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, loving, good pianist, well educated, and would have no objection to living in France. Respondent must not be under twenty-one, tall, handsome, loving; he must be in a good position.

LUCY S., twenty-two, medium height, good looking, loving, and of parents of independent position; wishes to marry a steady young man who is not over twenty-six, handsome, loving, intelligent, and not object to going abroad.

LOTTA, twenty-three, 5ft. 5in., dark-brown eyes, rosy cheeks, well educated, and the only daughter of a tradesman; would like to correspond with a young man who is handsome, and not more than twenty-five; a tradesman preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

M. M. is responded to by—"Emily G.," tall, pretty, dark eyes, cheerful disposition, loving, fond of children and domesticated.

DAVID C. by—"Rose G.," twenty, a brunette, affectionate, domesticated and very fond of music.

H. C. by—"Nellie," rather tall, golden hair, blue eyes, daughter of a leading tradesman.

GEORGE by—"George," dark hair, hazel eyes, handsome, loving, fond of home and children.

G. S. by—"Follie," tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of children, and affectionate.

QUEEN OF MAY by—"J. D.," twenty-two, tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, would make a loving husband and has all the qualities required.

M. W. by—"J. B.," twenty-one, tall, dark complexion, dark hair, hazel eyes, a native of Nottinghamshire, and a sailor, fond of children.

JAMES by—"Lizzie," twenty-two, tall, dark hair, gray eyes, well educated, domesticated, fond of home, of a loving disposition and wishing to go abroad.

ARTHUR by—"Lizzie S.," nineteen, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, pretty, well educated, and able to keep a home comfortably.

THOMAS H. by—"Rose A.," eighteen, nice looking, rather dark, very affectionate, would make a good wife.

RUPERT by—"Eve," seventeen, tall and graceful, has long golden hair, large blue eyes, fair complexion, is well educated, good and gentle, has a small annuity, is fond of home and music.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MISS H. (Mileen).—Declined with thanks.

A READER.—Attention will be paid to any letter you may send, provided it contains full particulars.

ROSE must state her age. The young man is anxious to know whether she is budding or in full bloom.

J. S.—You should inquire of the booksellers in Fleet Street, Strand, and that neighbourhood.

J. G. H.—You should make a personal application to the office of the Swedish Embassy on the subject.

LXIXOON.—The statement is by far too indefinite, and must be considerably amended before it can receive further attention.

HEPHERIAN.—No charge is made. You should write out your wishes in as precise and definite a manner as you can, and send that writing to the Editor.

EMMA M.—The remedies for pimples on the face are a fair amount of out-door exercise, and medicine suitable to the constitution to be obtained of a chemist.

JAMES L. and CHARLES A.—The letter is so carelessly written and so badly worded and spelled that the ladies could not have anything further to say on the subject.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—We have often said we do not publish the names of the residences of individuals. Those about which you inquire are well known, and can be readily found in the London Directory.

E. F.—The word "good" in the communication you have made us is so exceedingly relative and indefinite that it will be necessary for you to state your views with much greater precision.

E. B. B.—1.—You must depend on that native wit which attaches itself peculiarly to those who have been really smitten by love. 2. The baptismal rite has nothing whatever to do with the claims of individuals to legacies properly bequeathed to them.

A BUTCHER'S BOY.—We think we are correct in saying that the fastest trotting time on record is one mile in two minutes fifteen seconds and a quarter. This feat was recently accomplished by a horse named "Jo Elliott," over the Mystic Park Course, Boston, U.S.

ONFMAN.—The art with which you desire to become acquainted is best learned by serving an apprenticeship to a respectable person whose skill has been endorsed by the practical success which has attended his manipulations.

T. F.—It is of no importance by whom the indenture of apprenticeship was drawn. The deed having been properly worded and signed will render the apprentice liable to punishment by a magistrate if the apprentice wilfully neglect to fulfil his engagements.

CHAS. H.—We are afraid we can do nothing for you in the matter. The early bird catches the worm. Industry like virtue is its own reward, and so forth. What your neighbour does can be done by you, if which we doubt not, you equal him in enterprise and perseverance.

ELIZA B.—The cuckoo we believe is seldom heard in England after the end of June. There is said to be truth in the old rhyme

"The first cock of hay

Frighens cuckoo away."

COLLEGE BAWN.—The growth as a rule continues as long as there is vitality in the human frame. No doubt it may be almost imperceptible, but in the shape of change and renewal it is always going on. Length should be distinguished from growth. It is seldom that sufficient length is attained to satisfy human vanity—an inconvenient length is never reached.

FLEMMER (Glasgow).—Free or assisted passages are not granted to persons in your condition of life. You should give the question of emigration a very serious consideration. Of course plumbers and gasfitters find their chief employment in populous towns. There are thousands in Old England who would materially improve their condition by emigrating—there are some who had better stay where they are.

UKA (Wolverhampton).—An apprentice can marry if he has attained the age of fourteen, if he has the consent of his parents, and if the marriage is contracted in a building duly registered for that purpose; twenty-one days' notice having been previously given in the form prescribed by law, which form can be ascertained upon application to the registrar of marriages for the district in which the parties reside.

NELLIE and MINNIE (Cork).—Though affectionate hearts are priceless they cannot constitute the only qualification in a husband, although they may do in a wife. Many a man will toil years and years—indeed his life through—and will feel amply rewarded if he finds nothing more in